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DUNGEON™

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

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By Luke Johnson

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Whose Campaign Is This, Anyway?

I started building D&D® campaigns when I was 11, which means I've been building campaigns longer than I've been *driving* (legally, at least). Over the years, I've learned exactly one thing about building campaigns: *Don't do all the work yourself.* Give your players space to enhance what you create, and when they try to add to your campaign, embrace their ideas as if they were your own. Just say *yes*.

All kinds of D&D books are aimed squarely at players. Just as I urge you to pilfer campaign ideas from other sources, you should also incite your players to pull ideas from core rulebooks, power sourcebooks, and campaign player's guides. Encourage them to explore and use what's out there.

I dare my players to introduce new elements to my campaigns. I *double-dare* them. Case in point, when I sat down to build my first 4th Edition campaign (which plays out every Monday and Wednesday night with two different groups of players), I designed the world of Iomandra around the PC races in the *Player's Handbook*. I gave no thought as to how goliaths, gnomes, shifters, and other races might fit into the campaign world, and I didn't go out of my way to create space for them, either. However, when Greg Bilsland (one of our editors) joined the Wednesday night game, he wanted to try out an early version of the genasi, which hadn't yet been published. I said yes. When a player comes to you and asks to add something new to your campaign, you should also say yes. *Why?* Because "your" campaign is the players' campaign, too. If one of your players can imagine a place for genasi in the world, then so can you.

When the time came to insinuate "Brell" into the game, Greg came armed with a background for his character. In fleshing out the how's and why's of Brell's past, Greg had questions about genasi in Iomandra. Where do they live? How prevalent are they? Do they have any particular views? What do the other races of the world think of them? My answer to him was basically, "You tell me." So, he wrote up a couple paragraphs and sent them to me, and I took those ideas and figured out a way to work genasi into the story of the campaign. In fact, I was so inspired by what Greg had done that I decided to turn one of the major paragon-tier villains of the campaign into a genasi. It forced me to make genasi relevant to the campaign, and frankly the campaign is lot stronger with them around, particularly since Greg and I have portrayed genasi as something of a mystery to the other races.

A campaign world that evolves to include new game elements is much more fun and interesting to players than one that doesn't allow *this* or *that*. The trick is to get your players to do some of the heavy lifting, to make *them* the instigators when it comes to expanding the depth and breadth of the campaign.

Sadly, Brell died before he had the chance to savor the fruits of what he'd wrought. The day after Brell's untimely demise, Greg came by my desk and said, "Is it okay if my next character is a deva?" I, of course, said *yes*. I didn't have a clue how devas might fit into the campaign, but I basically left that up to Greg. Now it's hard to imagine the Iomandra campaign without them.

Heart of the Forbidden Forge

By Luke Johnson

An adventure for 7th-level characters

illustrations by Matt Cavotta, Francis Tsai and Empty Room Studio [David Hammond, and Frank Wall]

cartography by Sean Macdonald

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"I knew hiring goblins was a bad idea. I knew! But my respect for Jelia blinded me and stayed my tongue. Now I sense something has awakened deep within the forge, and I am stuck here as a hostage to ensure Jelia's cooperation. Dear reader, if you hold this book in your hands, I beg you to make it your sacred duty to return it to Breland and the King's Citadel. They must know what happened here should Valsath and her hobgoblins take the secrets of this forge back to Darguun."

–Journal of Marus, a Citadel novice

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The Kech Shaarat goblins have numerous schemes to unite the Dhakaani clans under the Bladebearer banner. One such plan focused on beating the Wordbearer goblins to an artifact called the *Ashen Crown*. A group of adventurers defeated the goblins in this quest, but other missions are moving forward. One involves the capture of a destroyed creation forge and the forbidden creature within it. The Bladebearers have an unlikely ally in this goal: an eladrin artificer working for the Brelish government.

"Heart of the Forbidden Forge" is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for five 7th-level characters in the Eberron® campaign setting. If the PCs have been through the events in *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*, this adventure can be easily slotted after the events of that one have concluded. Characters do not need to have been involved with *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*™ to play through "Heart of the Forbidden Forge." The adventure works fine for other PCs as well, and it can be adapted easily to another campaign setting.

BACKGROUND

During the Last War, a creation forge near Darguun, on the border of what is now the Mournland, was important in the experiments that led to the creation of the warforged race. In the past, it produced many prototypes that led the way for the creation of modern warforged. Later, it continued experiments in this vein. Then, the forge's overseer, Haestus d'Cannith, was also interested in necromancy and how he could combine this art with Cannith's artifice to create other sorts of beings. Haestus and his people kept working on prototype warforged and constructs. They extended their experiments largely without oversight from house officials.

The forge's importance was not lost on other forces. Shortly before the Mourning ended the Last War, a group of irregular special forces, thought to be a freelance mercenary team in service to the Karrnathi government, collapsed the forge's entrance, trapping everyone inside. Haestus and the other artificers died slowly.

The Karrnathi irregulars were journeying through Cyre with news of their success when the Mourning struck. Nobody saw them ever again. In the chaos that surrounded the ensuing events, the creation forge on Darguun's border was all but forgotten. Even though House Cannith knows of the forge, its actual location was secreted in documents held within Cyre. Or so the house officials think.

Several months ago, Jelia, an eladrin artificer working for the Citadel of Breland, discovered a mention of the forge while going through old documents from the Last War. She also found captured documents indicating that the Cannith artificers had been working on something that could have turned the tide of the Last War: infiltrator warforged units and an autonomous heavy assault construct in the shape of a dragon. These documents, unseen since the Day of Mourning, indicated that the forge had even produced working prototypes.

If she told her patrons about her discovery, they would send a team from the Citadel, and Jelia would gain little for her momentous discovery. She wanted the credit; she wanted to help her country in a more substantial way. She decided that she didn't need the Citadel to capture the forge for Breland.

But she knew she couldn't do it on her own, and her partner and apprentice Marus wasn't enough support. She needed a neutral third party—warriors who wouldn't betray her to her superiors until her plan was complete. Thus, she hired reputable hobgoblin mercenaries in Darguun. One of their leaders, Valsath, struck a deal with Jelia: For triple the normal fee, the goblins would help her find the forge, set it up and running, and then relinquish control of it to Breland. In return, Jelia promised to share her secrets with the group's artificers. Jelia realized that her new allies were dangerous, but she felt that she could handle them. In her haste, she failed to do enough legwork to discover Valsath and her cohorts are far from neutral. They're Bladebearers working under the cover of a mercenary company.

The mission started out promising. The entrance to the forge complex was beyond recovery, so Jelia and her new goblin allies blew a hole in a nearby cliff. This new cave allowed access to a small complex of natural caverns that connect to the forge.

Once inside, Jelia and the Bladebearers discovered prototype constructs and Haestus d'Cannith, now a forgewraith. Since Jelia and Valsath planned to restart the forge, Haestus agreed to work with them. Everything was going well, until Jelia and Valsath arrived at the heart of the complex. Here they found the creation forge, and next to it stood the hulking, motionless form of the prototype dragon.

Several days of sweat and toil allowed Jelia to activate the dragon. When the dragon stirred, the creation forge also came to life. Machinery whirred and gears turned, although the forge was clearly damaged. "I am Calmachia," said the dragon, "and my heart and this forge are one. And you are mine now." It turns out that before she went into torpor, the dragon had linked the forge to herself.

Calmachia promptly set to work creating smaller dragonlike constructs—her "children." Valsath quickly turned on Jelia, keeping the artificer and her apprentice alive for further use. The hobgoblin commander figures that Calmachia and her progeny can help the Bladebearers slay their enemies and prove their strength to the other Dhakaani clans.

Adventure Synopsis

Through any of a variety of hooks, the PCs learn of the creation forge that was once buried and abandoned, but no longer. Investigating, they fight their way through goblins, constructs, and undead, contend with old traps, and finally meet Valsath and the true power behind the forge, Calmachia. They can also free Jelia and her aide from the clutches of the draconic construct and the Bladebearers.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive at the creation forge on the border of the Mournland. Getting here should be quick, though if you (and the players) want, you can throw an encounter at the PCs during the journey. The PCs might be coming to the forge based on one or more of the following hooks.

Hook: Wordbearer Warning

If the PCs have a relationship with the Kech Volaar (Wordbearer goblins)—which they do if they have completed *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*—a concerned goblin approaches them. The Wordbearers have identified Valsath's "mercenary" company as a group of Bladebearer operatives. They also know that this company is now working for an eladrin artificer. They don't know Jelia's true identity or purpose, but they do know that the artificer and her hirelings have gone to the forge. The Wordbearers lost a scouting party sent to investigate, and they can give the PCs enough information to locate the forge.

Major Quest: Locate the forge and prevent the Bladebearers from gaining access to its secrets.

Minor Quest: Find out the identity of the eladrin artificer, and prevent her from working with the Bladebearers further.

Hook: Missing Agent

Characters who completed *Seekers of the Ashen Crown* have probably worked with the Citadel and have a favorable relationship with the agency. Such PCs are also likely to have favorable relations with a goblin faction in Darguun, making them ideal candidates for this job. Regardless, through a government contact, the PCs learn the Citadel is concerned because an elite agent, an artificer named Jelia, is missing. She was recently working on a case involving war research in Old Cyre, and her last report indicates that she went to Darguun in the company of goblin mercs. The Citadel suspects Jelia's mission might have gone badly, and it sends the PCs to find Jelia and bring her back alive—or to bring back whatever she was after. The characters eventually track her to the forge.

Major Quest: Locate Jelia and rescue her from the goblins if necessary. Bring her back to the Citadel.

Minor Quest: Find out what Jelia was working on, and secure it for Breland—or secure Breland against it.

Hook: Cannith Family Secrets

Although most people have forgotten the existence of the creation forge, House Cannith hasn't. The house just hasn't yet gotten around to sending a recovery team. At least one house faction learns that someone has blown their way into the forge. Eager to prevent enemy acquisition of house secrets, a Cannith representative calls on the PCs to investigate and "ensure that House Cannith's property is uncompromised." If one of the PCs is a house scion, this becomes duty rather than a job.

Major Quest: Secure the Cannith facility for future use, keeping its secrets and dealing with any threats within it.

Minor Quest: Keep any advancements (such as Calmachia) as functional as possible while neutralizing dangers within the forge.

Quests

The PCs have a single major quest that is level 7. Completing it offers a reward of 1,500 XP, divided among the party members. They might have a number of quests, especially if you combine one or more hooks. In this case, the PCs choose the major quest to complete, and can try to complete other major quests as if they were minor. For instance, it's impossible to complete the major quest for the Citadel and completely succeed for House Cannith, and vice versa. However, each minor quest you deem completed is worth 300 XP, divided among the party members.

Treasure

Characters who successfully complete this adventure should earn enough experience to advance from level 7 to about a quarter of the way between 8th and 9th. That means you should assign all ten level 7 parcels, and possibly one level 8 parcel, to locations in this adventure. The encounters have notes about locating parcels in them. Here's a summary, with NPC encounters noted to allow you the option of assigning the NPC a magic item he or she can use that is still valuable to the PCs.

Encounter 1: One parcel.
Encounter 4: One parcel.
Encounter 6: One parcel.
Encounter 7: One parcel (NPC).
Encounter 9: One parcel.
Area 12: One parcel.
Encounter 13: One parcel.
Encounter 15: One parcel (NPC).
Encounter 16: One parcel (NPC).
Encounter 17: Two parcels.

Research Notes

If you like, the characters might find Haestus d'Cannith's notes in various forge areas. These are curiosities that describe Haestus's unethical work, necromantic dabblings, and questionable practices, as well as his sources—perhaps ancient artifacts from Xen'drik. They can be valuable to the right buyer, serving as a form of treasure. Further, these papers might serve as hooks for future adventures by identifying other sites and treasures. Since these notes are just color and treasure unless you use them as hooks, you should craft their contents after familiarizing yourself with this adventure.

The Forge Complex

The creation forge complex consists of three areas: a few natural caverns that connect with the main area, the facility's upper level, and the facility's lower level.

Features of the Natural Caverns

The natural caverns consist of areas F1-F3. They consist of brown stone with rough walls. The following features apply to them unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 15 feet high.

Walls: The rough stone requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Features of the Upper Level

The forge complex's upper level consists of areas F4–F13. They are composed of smooth white marble with gray-green flecks and veins. The following features apply to them unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dim light. A pale orange luminescence suffuses the upper level. It has no obvious source.

Ceiling: The ceilings are 15 feet high.

Walls: The smooth stone requires a DC 25 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: The doors are copper-sheathed wood. They open easily and are unlocked.

Features of the Lower Level

The forge complex's lower level consists of areas F14–F18. They have an industrial and arcane feel: surfaces (walls, floors, and ceilings) are covered with steel plates, and arcane devices appear throughout the area. The following features apply to this area unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dim light. A pale red luminescence suffuses the upper level. It has no obvious source.

Ceiling: The ceilings are 20 feet high.

Walls: The steel walls are difficult to climb, but the seams between the metal plates provide minor hand and footholds (DC 25 Athletics check to climb).

Doors: The doors are steel. Each side of such a door has a wheel in the center and is locked. Spinning the wheel (a standard action) unlocks it.

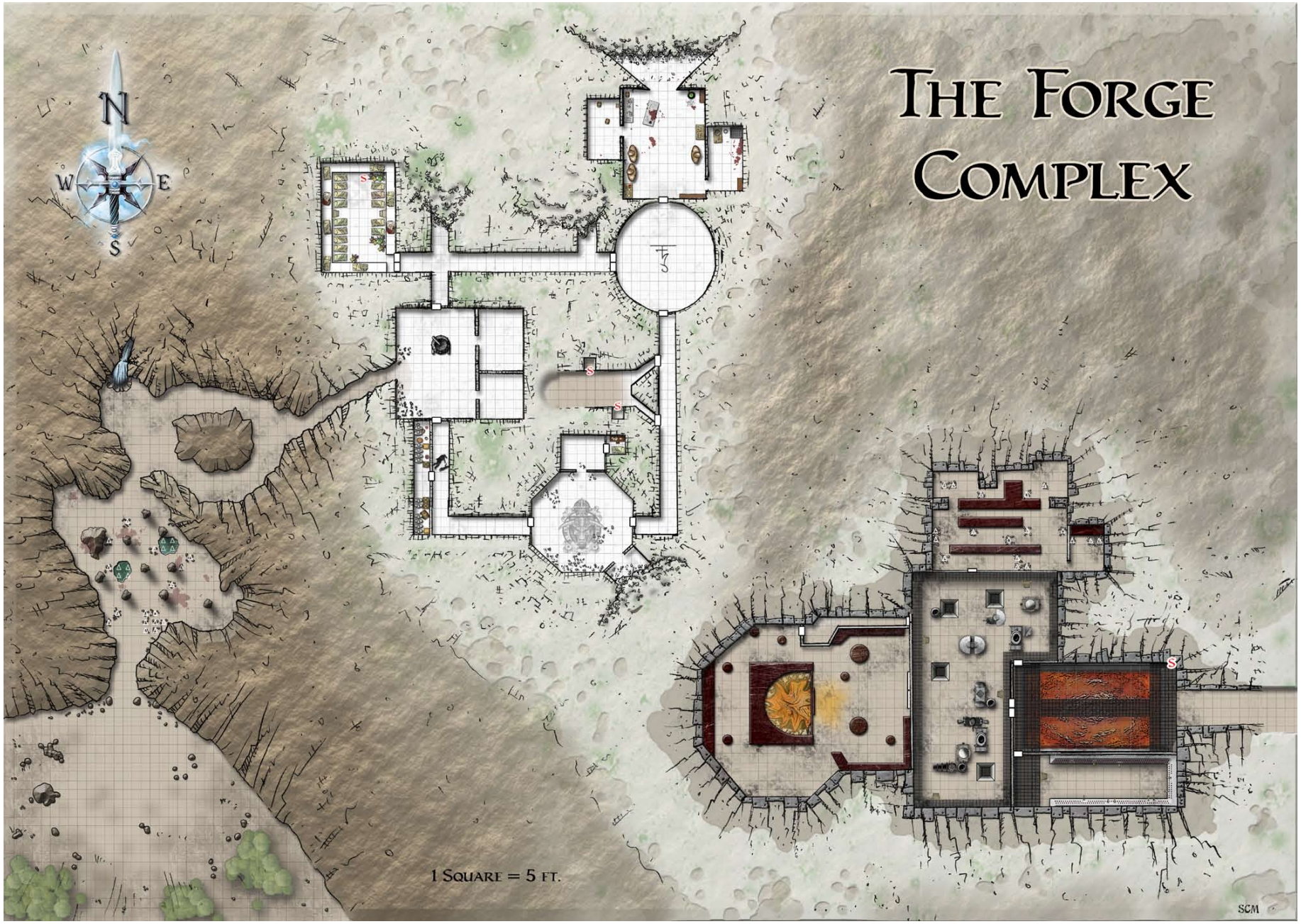
1. Entry

Not long ago, several Kech Volaar scouts ran afoul of the forge's denizens. Several Bladebearers stand guard here.

As the PCs approach the cave, read:

The hillside is covered with scree, thorny bushes, and large rocks that look like they tumbled down from above. A tall cliff rises above it, and soon you notice a cave in the cliff. A great deal of debris lies near the entrance. It looks like the hole was knocked open by explosive means.

Tactical Encounter: 1. Entry Guards (page 13).


The Forge Complex
N
W
E
S
1 Square = 5 ft.
SCM

2. Waterfall

The body of a slain Wordbearer goblin now lies at the bottom of a chasm in this room.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The hall opens into a small chamber. A waterfall streams down the far wall, disappearing into a crevasse in the floor. From the ledge, you can see the waterfall falls about 30 feet into a shallow pool below.

Nature DC 10: *The pool must have a narrow outlet, preventing the falls from flooding this area.*

Perception DC 19: *A corpse lies in the hollow behind where the waterfall strikes rock.*

The waterfall descends for 30 feet (DC 20 Athletics to climb the slick rock). Investigating the body turns up a couple of interesting things.

Heal DC 15: *The goblin died of violence—multiple bludgeons and slashes. He was dead before he fell here and has been dead for about a week.*

History or Nature DC 15: *The goblin has a branding scar that marks him as a Wordbearer.*

3. Warded Passage

Jelia placed a glyph of warding halfway down this hallway. She and her allies use the other passageway.

Warding Hall Glyph	**Level 7 Elite Warder**
Trap	XP 600

A hidden glyph in the wall suddenly glows and unleashes a violet cascade of magical force as you pass.

Trap: A magical glyph unleashes energy when the trap is triggered.

Perception

✦ DC 22: The character notices the glyph.

Additional Skill: Arcana

✦ DC 22: The character senses the glyph, then spots it.

Trigger

When a creature passes the halfway point of the passage, where the glyph is located, the glyph attacks.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 3

Targets: All creatures in burst

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 5 force damage, and targets are slammed to the ceiling (1d10 damage) and then fall (1d10 damage).

Miss: Half the force damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Countermeasure

✦ Arcana or Thievery (DC 21); standard action; an adjacent character can disable the glyph with four successful checks.

4. Prototype Lab

Mindless models for warforged prototypes dwell in these chambers. Unlike normal warforged, these creatures rely on an arcane generator to function.

Tactical Encounter: 4. Prototype Lab (page 15).

5. Collapsed Passages

This hallway and the one to the east are collapsed. The forge complex used to be much larger, but a good portion of it collapsed in the attack several years ago.

6. Living Quarters

The Bladebearers have appropriated this chamber to use as living quarters. They also discovered a secret trapdoor, which bypasses the traps in area 8.

Tactical Encounter: 6. Living Quarters (page 17).

7. Construct Lab

In life, Haestus d'Cannith experimented by combining necromancy with alchemy and artifice. These rooms were his primary laboratory in that regard.

Tactical Encounter: 7. Construct Lab (page 19).

8. Security Gauntlet

This wide hallway slopes down to area F14. Its hallway is trapped heavily. Jelia detected the traps when she and the Bladebearers originally moved into the complex; since they found a better way to the lower level (in area F6), she left the traps active.

Tactical Encounter: 8. Security Gauntlet (page 21).

9. Ruined Foyer

This chamber was once the primary entrance to the forge complex.

Tactical Encounter: 9. Ruined Entrance (page 23).

10. Guard Post

The door to this small room is locked from the outside, and it requires a successful DC 20 Thievery check to open or a key that Valsath has. This small chamber was once a security post. Now, it serves as a holding cell for Marius, Jelia's erstwhile apprentice. The room has a desk, chair, and empty weapon rack, a chamber pot, and a small store of food and water.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens into a small chamber. A desk stands near one wall, and sitting at it is a male—a half-elf with red hair and a weary expression. Looking a bit battered, he wears in an outfit an explorer might wear. He's writing and drawing in a tattered book with a quill pen.

Perception Check
DC 14: The *half-elf has nothing resembling a weapon or implement. He appears to be unarmed.*

To approach without attracting Marus's attention, the PCs must succeed on DC 16 Stealth checks.

When Marus becomes aware of the PCs, read:

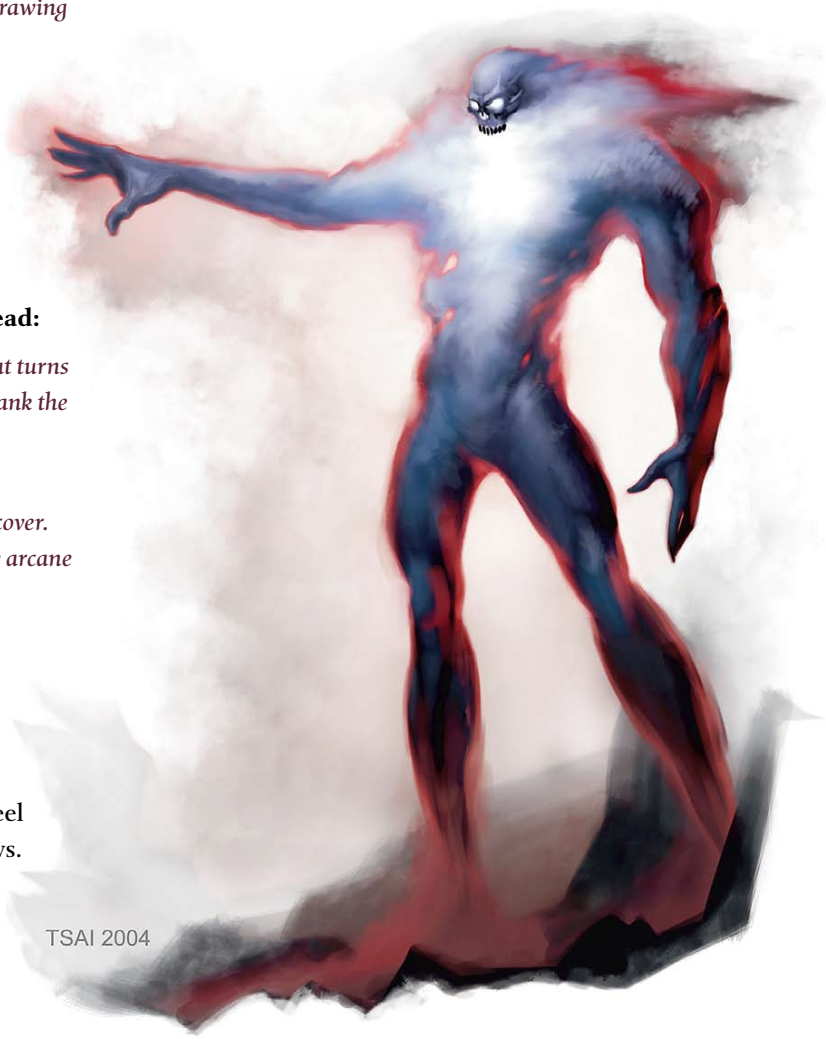
The half-elf looks up with an alarmed expression that turns into a smile when he sees you. "Oh," he says. "Oh, thank the Host." He shuts his book, closes his eyes, and sighs.

Perception Check
DC 16: *He places his thumb on a sigil on the book cover. The symbol glows dimly. (DC 19 Arcana to note the arcane nature of this sigil.)*

Insight Check
DC 14: *His relief seems genuine.*

Talking to Marus

Marus hopes the PCs are here to liberate the forge, and thereby him. He is wise enough to feel the characters out before revealing all he knows. Marus is here to impart any background information you want to give out, telling the characters everything that happened up to Jelia and the hobgoblins breaking into the forge complex. He is aware that he is severely outmatched in physical terms. Marus has no love for the goblins, but he has mixed feelings toward Jelia—admiration mixed with blame. He desperately wants to go back to Breland, clear his name, and put this fiasco behind him.



Use this section to aid in interactions with Marus. Give out information without requiring checks if you think the players' roleplaying is especially appropriate. At the very least, the PCs gain check bonuses (+2) if they are forthcoming and reveal intentions in line with Marus's hopes. Further, the players might come up with other ways to gain information from Marus—the skills and DCs indicated below are just guidelines. If a check fails, Marus expresses distrust and hesitation (DC 10 Insight to discern), but no hostility.

✦ **Who are you?:** (DC 8 Diplomacy) *"My name is Marus, and I am an agent for the Brelish Crown—an assistant to another agent here."*

✦ **Who is this other agent?:** (DC 8 Diplomacy) *"Her name is Jelia. She is the senior agent on this mission."*

✦ **What is the mission?:** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"Jelia planned to reactivate the forge for Breland. She wanted to play the hero, so we went without Brelish support. Instead, she hired these godsforsaken goblins."*

✦ **What are you doing here?:** (DC 8 Diplomacy) *"Valsath, the goblin leader, turned on us. She and hers are Bladebearers, which means as soon as Jelia and I are of no use, we'll be dead. They keep me locked in here so she won't turn on them. You have to get us out of here."*

✦ **What's going on here?:** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"Valsath and Jelia found something deep in the forge. You've seen those drake homunculi? I think it must be the key to creating them. This place holds a creation forge, as well as something else intelligent and capable of running the forge."*

✦ **A creature runs the forge?:** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"Something like that. Jelia and Valsath call whatever it is 'Calmachia.' They appear to be taking steps to aid this Calmachia. More of those drakes have been created in the past weeks, and the process appears to be speeding up."*

✦ **Whom can we trust?:** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"I'm sure Jelia is being forced to cooperate. We wouldn't be in this mess if she hadn't been so . . . careless. Still, she might help you if you can prove you're here to help."*

More about Marus

Marus is too terrified to help the PCs fight. If he's attacked, he has statistics similar to Dakai's (page 19). He tries to surrender quickly or flee, rather than fighting, but he defends himself if he must.

The book Marus has is a journal in which he is writing notes for his report to his Citadel superiors. It can impart much of the information Marus knows. The sigil on the book obscures its actual contents with seemingly personal and sappy diary entries (DC 27 Perception check to see the real Citadel report entries; DC 21 Arcana check to break the sigil). Marus also has thieves' tools hidden on his person (DC 15 Perception check).

11. Hallway

This hallway once held a trap. Two Bladebearers ran afoul of it, then Jelia disarmed it.

When the PCs can see into the hallway, read:

You look into a long hallway. About halfway down, two blackened bodies—one large, the other small—lie contorted on the floor.

Arcana or Heal DC 20: *Intense lightning killed these creatures.*

Nature DC 12: *The small body is that of a goblin, while the large is that of a bugbear.*

Perception DC 22: *The runes and crystals of an old trap are embedded in a grove in the walls here. Someone or something marred the runes and removed some of the crystals, probably disarming the trap.*

12. Storage

This long room served as a storage area for construct part specimens.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

You look into a long room. Shelves contain artificial limbs, heads, torsos, and other parts of incomplete constructs—humanoid and otherwise.

Treasure: One parcel.

13. Catwalk

A catwalk crosses a lake of molten metal. The PCs encounter Haestus d'Cannith (again) here.

Tactical Encounter: 13. Catwalk (page 25).

14. Creation Forge Controls

This is the primary control area for the forge in area 17. The entry is locked (Valsath has the key).

Skill Challenge: Disabling the Forge (page 27).

15. Arcane Workshop

This large chamber was a primary work area for the forge. Here large pieces of arcane machinery were assembled and constructs were repaired. Valsath has taken a liking to this place.

Tactical Encounter: 15. Arcane Workshop (page 28).

16. Storage

This room is a storage area for parts and tools the forge workers once used. Jelia has been spending a lot of time in this room lately to find parts to meet Calmachia's demands and to escape the hobgoblins and their draconian mistress.

Tactical Encounter: 16. Jelia's Refuge (page 30).

17. Wyrm Forge

Although the entire facility is often referred to as "the creation forge," this room contains the forge. It is here that warforged, constructs, and Calmachia walked from the fires of their creation into life.

Tactical Encounter: 17. Wyrm Forge (page 32).

Conclusion

Defeating Calmachia causes the forge to shut down. Someone might start the forge working again, but that someone probably shouldn't be the PCs.

If the characters allow it, Marus and Jelia can act as supporting characters on the trip back to Breland. Either might become a contact for PCs who treated them well.

If the PCs bring Jelia back to Breland for justice, the ramifications of her foolish actions should be tempered to fit the needs of your campaign. She endangered Breland's national security with her activities. However, if the Citadel can secure the creation forge and use it as leverage with House Cannith, Jelia's mission might be considered a risky but profitable success. Further, if the PCs vouch for Jelia, their words carry significant weight in the artificer's defense. For its part, House Cannith might hold Breland's possession of the forge, however temporary, against the characters.

In the case that the PCs serve House Cannith, the house is grateful for the location of the forge and its contents. House members move quickly to reestablish the facility. This can have lasting ramifications on the campaign when House Cannith starts tinkering with the arcane discoveries inside the forge.

The PCs have thwarted the Bladebearers and aided the cause of the Wordbearers—at least twice now if the characters played through *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*. The Bladebearer leadership might take more of an interest in these pesky adventurers. That interest is unlikely to be good for the PCs.

1: Entry Guards

Encounter Level 6 (1,275 XP)

Setup

2 Bladebearer hobgoblins (B)
1 hobgoblin fleshcarver (F)
5 Valsath's warriors (W)

Plenty of boulders and undergrowth dot the hillside leading up to the cave, so the characters can approach stealthily if they like. The goblins aren't particularly alert, so their passive Perception checks oppose whatever Stealth checks the PCs care to make.
If the hobgoblins notice the characters' approach, the hobgoblins hide, making Stealth checks. Place a hobgoblin's miniature only if the PCs notice the creature.

When the characters see into the area, read:

A large natural cavern extends into the cliff. Several torches are placed on poles wedged into debris around the room. Several boulders—8 or 9 feet tall—stand here and there. Passages lead off from the cavern.

Perception
(Opposing Stealth Checks): *A slight sound or motion draws your eye to a shadow. An armored hobgoblin lurks there.*
DC 15: *A couple of large, reddish-brown patches stain the floor.*
(DC 15 Arcana or Religion to discern this is blood rock.)

Tactics

Bladebearer hobgoblins move around the battle's fringes, targeting those at the back of the party. They use *Bladebearer finesse* and *Dhakaani footwork* to move to these foes, and they use their stealth or they flank with their allies to make *scimitar advantage* attacks.

The fleshcarver moves into melee quickly so that he can use *glaive flurry*. He resorts to ranged attacks only when he cannot reach a target for melee or when *defensive dart* triggers.

Hobgoblins with *phalanx soldier* try to fight alongside at least one ally. The warriors attack to aid their stronger allies with flanking and the like.

All the creatures know about the blood rock. The fleshcarver and Bladebearer hobgoblins fight to the death. If all three of them fall, any remaining warriors surrender.

5 Valsath's Warriors (W) **Level 7 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin XP 75 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 23 (25 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.

Longbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +9, History +5
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows

Hobgoblin Fleshcarver (F) **Level 6 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid XP 500

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
Fleshcarver's Trap aura 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage the first time it moves during that turn.
HP 146; **Bloodied** 73
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Glaive (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

Toxic Dart (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target was already slowed, it is instead immobilized (save ends).

Defensive Dart (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin fleshcarver is hit by an enemy's melee attack; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
The fleshcarver shifts 2 squares and uses *toxic dart* against the triggering enemy.

Glaive Flurry (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +11 vs. AC; 3d4 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin fleshcarver slides the target 2 squares. The target must end the slide within 3 squares of the fleshcarver.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin fleshcarver becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
The fleshcarver rolls a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier
A hobgoblin fleshcarver gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Equipment chain armor, glaive, 10 poisoned darts

2 Bladebearer Hobgoblins (B)	Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 62; **Bloodied** 31	
AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	
Speed 6; see also *Dhakaani footwork*	
⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).	
⸸ **Scimitar Advantage** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; at-will)	
The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes two scimitar attacks.	
Bladebearer Finesse (free; usable only while charging; at-will)	
The Bladebearer hobgoblin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of its charge.	
Dhakaani Footwork (free, when the Bladebearer hobgoblin hits with a melee attack; at-will)	
The Bladebearer hobgoblin shifts 1 square.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)	
The hobgoblin warrior makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11	
Str 20 (+7)	**Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 2 scimitars	

Developments

Hallways: If the PCs search the area, they might discover that the hall to the east hasn't been used for foot traffic for weeks (DC 23 Perception).

Searching the Hobgoblins: If the PCs search closely, such as by removing a bracer or something similar from a hobgoblin, they notice the symbol of an ornate blade branded on the hobgoblins. This is the Bladebearer symbol (DC 15 History or Nature to identify).

Questioning Prisoners: A prisoner doesn't talk willingly and lies if questioned (DC 14 Insight to discern). A prisoner can be tricked, cajoled, or threatened (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate) into telling the truth. Even then, the goblin answers only specific questions and otherwise avoids straight answers.

✦ *Who is your leader?* (DC 14) Valsath is the leader. The prisoner trusts Valsath and can describe her. Valsath has been deep in the forge for a long time now.

✦ *Who else is here?* (DC 14) Jelia, a "weakling eladrin artificer," brought the goblins here. She works for Breland and is deep in the forge, perhaps with Valsath. Dakai, a hobgoblin artificer, is working in a lab with golems (area 7). He has numerous guards. Some of the golems might work.

✦ *What other dangers?* (DC 14) The prisoner knows of the glyph (area 3) and the prototype warforged (area 4). A successful DC 19 Insight check reveals the goblin is withholding information, and a subsequent DC 14 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check causes the creature to reveal that other guards are camping in a nearby room (area 6).

✦ *What are you doing here?* (DC 16) Valsath found something deep in the forge, and she plans to seize control of the place when the time is right.

✦ *Are you Bladebearers?* (DC 19) The PC receives a +2 bonus to this check if he or she shows knowledge of the Bladebearers or the scars on the goblins' forearms. The goblin confirms the tribal affiliation of the goblins here. However, a failure indicates the prisoner lies, saying the goblins were Bladebearer slaves that escaped and formed a mercenary crew.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light from torches.

Boulders: The boulders are blocking terrain.

Debris: Debris from the excavation, as well as loose rocks, scree, and accumulated trash, are piled up in various parts of the chamber. This is difficult terrain, as marked on the map.

Blood Rock: The areas marked on the map are blood rock. A creature standing in a square of blood rock can score a critical hit on a natural die roll of 19 or 20.

Treasure: One parcel.

4. Prototype Lab

Encounter Level 8 (1,752 XP)

Setup

3 berserk warforged prototypes (B)
4 decrepit warforged (D)
1 infiltrator warforged prototype (I)
1 arcane generator (G)

The "warforged" here are experiments with differing body forms for possible implementation with actual military warforged models during the Last War. As such, none of them have true sentience. Instead, the arcane generator at the center of the room powers them and allows them to move. It also acts as a central intelligence and awareness for the constructs. Jelia tampered with the generator, disabling its safety protocols. Now, it activates and attacks any who enter besides her or her allies.

When the PCs can see into the chamber, read:

At the end of the natural tunnel, a hole is smashed in the wall. Beyond it is a room finely wrought of white stone with gray-green veins and flecks. A large arcane contraption of metal and stone stands in the center of the room. It is about 7 feet high; levers project from it, runes shine on its surface, and a large purple crystal glows at its apex.

Standing about the room are humanoid creatures like warforged. Some are incomplete or worn with time, while others have fared better. Most of those are wide-framed models that resemble the burliest human. One appears to have a sheathe of flesh that has been cut or torn away in places, revealing inner workings that are thinner than those of a normal warforged.

If the PCs enter or attack, read:

As you enter, the eyes of the inert constructs glow with the same purple color as the crystal at the top of the strange device. They lurch to life.

Tactics

The warforged prototypes surge into melee. They fight until destroyed or are convinced to cease their attacks (see Developments).

3 Berserk Warforged Prototypes (B) **Level 7 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 300 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 19; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage
Speed 6

⊕ **Sweeping Slam** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 4 damage to another enemy adjacent to the prototype. On a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.

↟ **Wild Charge** (standard; recharges after the berserk warforged prototype hits two or more targets with a *savage sweep*)
The prototype charges, gains a +3 bonus to AC during the charge, and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack: +11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

↟ **Savage Sweep** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14). *Miss:* 4 damage.

Arcane Empowerment
While the arcane generator functions, whenever a berserk warforged prototype hits with a melee attack, it gains 4 temporary hit points.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)

4 Decrepit Warforged (D) **Level 6 Minion Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 63 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 18; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Speed 5

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+9 vs. AC; 6 damage; on a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)

Infiltrator Warforged Prototype (I) **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 300

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40
AC 19 (21 against opportunity attacks); **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage
Speed 6

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the infiltrator warforged prototype shifts 1 square.

↟ **Infiltrator Feint** (minor; recharges after the infiltrator warforged prototype hits with *mimic's slam.)*
+10 vs. Reflex; the infiltrator prototype gains combat advantage against the target.

↟ **Mimic's Slam** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Fear**
The infiltrator warforged prototype mimics the target or one of the target's allies in some way; +11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of infiltrator warforged prototype's next turn.

Arcane Empowerment
While the arcane generator functions, whenever an infiltrator warforged prototype hits with a melee attack, it gains 3 temporary hit points.

Combat Advantage
An infiltrator warforged prototype deals 1d8 extra damage on melee attacks against any target granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Arcane Generator (G) **Level 7 Warder**
Trap XP 300

This arcane contraption of metal, gems, and stone, glows with some hidden purpose.

Trap: When triggered, the generator activates allied constructs and attacks to fend off those who might tamper with it.

Perception

No check is required to see the generator.

✦ DC 20; minor action; the character spots something on the generator that looks important to its working, granting a +2 bonus to a countermeasure skill check.

Additional Skill: Arcana

✦ DC 20; minor action; this device distributes energy to the area's constructs.

Initiative +6

Trigger

When a creature enters the lab, the trap rolls initiative, as do connected creatures. It makes an immediate reaction attack when damaged (see "Countermeasures").

Attack

Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10

Target: Each enemy in burst.

Attack: +10 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + 5 force damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

Effect: At the start of its next turn, a destroyed allied construct in the burst gains 1 hit point, reactivates, and can act. Each allied construct can be affected only once. If no destroyed allied construct is within the burst, one allied construct in the burst instead gains 5 temporary hit points.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 10

Targets: One creature

Attack: +10 vs. Will

Hit: 1d8 + 4 psychic damage.

Countermeasures

Each successful countermeasure check is cumulative; five such successes deactivates the generator.

✦ Arcana (DC 20); standard action; ranged 5 or melee 1; the character disrupts the generator's energy.

✦ Athletics (DC 15); standard action; an adjacent character breaks part of the generator, triggering the immediate reaction attack.

✦ Thievery (DC 20); standard action; an adjacent character tampers with the generator's workings.

✦ A character can attack the generator (AC 2, Reflex 2, Fortitude 20; hp 90; immune push, pull, and slide). An attacker triggers the immediate reaction attack.

Developments

Playing the Warforged Prototypes: The warforged are woefully inadequate compared to completely functional warforged. They are little more intelligent than animals. This fact might emerge during combat, since the warforged speak in halting Common or otherwise reveal their impaired mental function. They also reveal their role as experimental subjects, reporting on the significance of damage dealt to them or other conditions. Once the generator is deactivated, the warforged can be convinced not to attack PCs if one of the PCs suggests the current "test" or "experiment" is over.

Reactivating the Generator: Unless they destroy the generator, the PCs can reactivate it using Arcana and Thievery checks similar to those required to deactivate it. In doing so, they can repurpose the generator to attack creatures other than them.

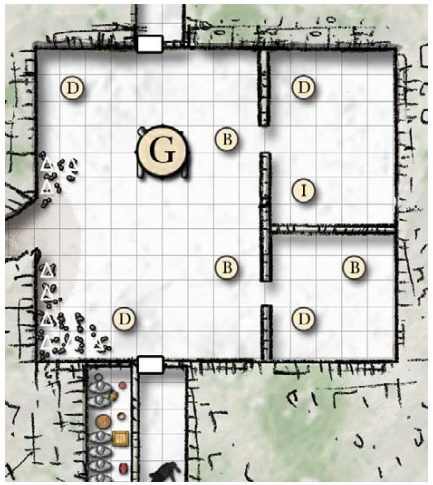
Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light emanates from the generator crystal.

Generator: The generator is blocking terrain.

Rubble: Rubble is strewn across the floor near the west wall. It was left over from when the hobgoblins smashed their way into the complex and is difficult terrain.

Treasure: One parcel.



6. Living Quarters

Encounter Level 6 (1,400 XP)

Setup

3 Bladebearer hobgoblins (H)
1 Bladebearer strangler (B)
6 Valsath's warriors (W)

Goblins rest here between guard shifts. One warrior keeps a lax watch from the room's corner while the others here are sleeping. Sneaking up on them requires only DC 13 Stealth checks, but the guard notices any light. If he becomes aware of the approach of other creatures, he quietly wakes his allies, who pretend to sleep. The bugbear sleeps on a ledge off the floor because she doesn't trust the hobgoblins to keep her safe. If the guard wakes her, she hides, increasing the Perception DC below to 25.

When the PCs can see the room, read:

Furs, blankets, and other bedding cover the floor of this chamber, which has a ledge around it and a high ceiling. Clothing, boots, fresh torches, and other personal items are also scattered about, but an element of organization is apparent. The creatures that dwell here are not savages.

Several hobgoblins sleep on some of the bedrolls, their weapons at hand. One lounges in the corner, sharpening his sword.

Perception
DC 20 (or 25): *A bugbear is asleep on the far ledge.*
If the PCs sneak up successfully, they surprise the sleeping goblins. If the goblins are aware, they might surprise the approaching PCs, allowing them to at least stand before the battle starts. In this latter case, the guard on watch charges during the surprise round.

3 Bladebearer Hobgoblins (H) **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 200 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 62; **Bloodied** 31
AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16
Speed 6; see also *Dhakaani footwork*

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).

⸸ **Scimitar Advantage** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; at-will)
The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes two scimitar attacks.

Bladebearer Finesse (free; usable only while charging; at-will)
The Bladebearer hobgoblin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of its charge.

Dhakaani Footwork (free, when the Bladebearer hobgoblin hits with a melee attack; at-will)
The Bladebearer hobgoblin shifts 1 square.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
The hobgoblin warrior makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11
Str 20 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 2 scimitars

Tactics

The warriors engage the PCs directly if possible. A couple of them might climb the ledge and fire arrows from there. They work together to provide combat advantage for their allies and to gain the benefit of *phalanx soldier.*

Bladebearer hobgoblins also engage directly, but they try to approach from a vector that can allow them combat advantage or allow them to shift into a flanking position after a successful attack. They use *Bladebearer finesse* to charge wounded enemies in hopes of taking those foes out quickly.

Lurking on the ledge to sneak up on an opponent, the Bladebearer strangler selects a target carefully from among those who like to stay out of melee. Since the bugbear is trained in Acrobatics, she isn't afraid to leap from the ledge to charge and grab someone. She then works to kill that enemy before moving on to another target.

Bladebearer Strangler (B) **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, bugbear XP 350

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 88; **Bloodied** 44
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19; see also *body shield* and *strangler's cover*
Speed 7

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.

⸸ **Strangle** (standard; requires combat advantage and a garrote; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Can be used as part of a charge; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed (-4 penalty to escape).
Sustain Standard: When it sustains this power, the bugbear deals the target 1d10 + 5 damage and sustains the grab.

Body Shield (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
The Bladebearer strangler makes the creature it is grabbing the triggering attack's target. The Bladebearer strangler can't use this power against a creature it is grabbing.

Strangler's Alacrity (free, when a creature the Bladebearer strangler has grabbed drops to 0 or fewer hit points; encounter)
The Bladebearer strangler can make a charge attack.

Combat Advantage
The Bladebearer strangler deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Strangler's Cover
While the Bladebearer strangler is grabbing a creature, that creature's allies consider the grabbed creature to be an enemy for determining cover.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Acrobatics +13, Intimidate +11, Stealth +15
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, wire garrote

Pulling Out Bedrolls: For some swashbuckling fun, the warriors might try to pull bedrolls from under a PC's feet to knock the character prone. Doing so is a standard action; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

6 Valsath's Warriors (W)	Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin	XP 75 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 23 (25 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.	
⊁ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)	
The hobgoblin rolls a saving throw against the triggering effect.	
Phalanx Soldier	
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +9, History +5	
Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows	

Development

Escape: If the battle here goes badly, one of the creatures here might try to escape. If one does so, it runs toward the security gauntlet in area 8 and avoids the pressure plates.

Questioning Prisoners: Any captured goblins act as those in area 1 did. The PCs might know to ask about more subjects (using Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidation).

✦ *How did you move beyond the warforged near the entrance?* (DC 14) Jelia and Dakai reactivated the generator there, making it so the warforged within ignored the goblins and their allies. They attack anyone else they don't recognize.

✦ *Where did the drake constructs come from?* (DC 14) Jelia, Dakai, and Valsath brought them from deeper in the forge.

✦ *Who is Haestus?* (DC 14) Valsath convinced the ghost she'd reactivate the forge, so he helps the goblins. He has power over the spirits of the dead in this place, but apparently not their souls.

✦ *Where does this trapdoor lead?* (DC 19) The goblin doesn't truly know where the passage under the door leads, but it does know it leads past the trap gauntlet in area 8. If it isn't convinced to tell the truth, it lies, saying Valsath and Jelia know. They didn't allow the others to see where the passage goes.

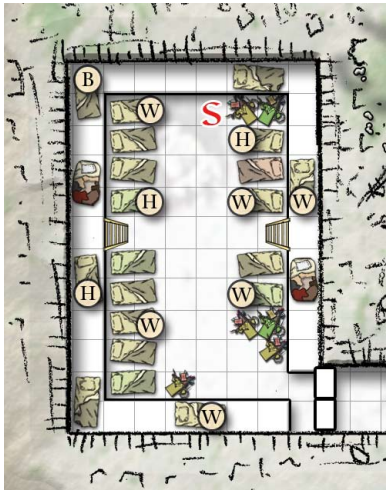
Features of the Area

Ledge: This ledge is 10 feet from the floor, and the walls leading to it are rougher than others in the complex (DC 20 Athletics to climb). A couple of ladders (DC 0 Athletics to climb; DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics to climb at normal speed) lead up to the ledge.

Secret Trapdoor: A DC 21 Perception check reveals the trapdoor. It is locked (DC 21 Thievery to open; Valsath and Jelia each have a key). Opening the door reveals a 10-foot-deep shaft with metal rungs hammered into its side. The shaft ends in a narrow, sloping tunnel that leads to area 13.

Gear: In a couple of areas, the stacked gear is enough to hinder movement, causing difficult terrain. Also, the PCs can find any useful gear mundane here that you'd like them to have. Food and water are part of the assortment.

Treasure: One parcel.



7. Construct Lab

Encounter Level 7 (1,600 XP)

Setup

Dakai (D)
1 decrepit flesh golem (G)
1 forge drake (F)
4 Valsath's warriors (W)

Initially, the PCs see only the hobgoblin warriors, who are acting as guards. These guards know that they have little chance against a well-armed party. They challenge the PCs, but stall with conversation as one warrior "idly" taps his longsword against the north door to alert Dakai about intruders. A successful Insight check (DC 14) reveals that the hobgoblins are stalling.

When the PCs can see into this chamber, read:

The door opens into a round room with doors on the north, west, and south walls. A rune is inlaid into the floor, and four hobgoblins stand near the door to the north. They seem shocked by your arrival.

Arcana Check
DC 17: *The rune on the ground courses with eldritch energy. Standing on it empowers arcane attacks.*
DC 21: *The character knows the specifics of the rune (see "Features of the Area," below).*

Dakai, an artificer, has reanimated one of the constructs, but time has not been kind to it. If a hobgoblin warrior raps on the door or a fight starts, Dakai and his creatures take 1 round to prepare, then join the fray.

When the PCs can see into the lab area, read:

Four hulking forms loom in this macabre room. Each is vaguely humanoid but constructed of mismatched humanoid parts sewn together with metallic thread and other metal parts. Tools hang on the walls, and shelves hold various containers.

Dakai (D) **Level 7 Controller (Leader)**
Small natural humanoid, goblin XP 300
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20
Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

Mace (standard; at-will) ✦ **Arcane, Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the next of Dakai's allies to attack the target gains +2 to its attack roll.

Rod Arc (standard; at-will) ✦ **Arcane, Implement, Lightning**
Dakai ignores the target's cover; ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 lightning damage, and the target takes -3 to its next damage roll.

Shard Orb (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Arcane, Force, Implement, Zone**
Area burst 1 within 10; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Effect:* The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Dakai's next turn. An enemy who ends its turn in this zone takes 1d10 + 4 force damage.

Resistive Formula (minor; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Healing**
Close burst 5; allies in the burst gain +1 to AC and can end this bonus as a free action to gain 5 temporary hit points.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack)
Dakai shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +9, Stealth +5, Thievery +10
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 18 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, mace, rod

Decrepit Flesh Golem (G) **Level 8 Elite Brute**
Large natural animate (construct) XP 700
Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 210; **Bloodied** 105
AC 20; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5; can't shift
Action Points 1

Slam (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Berserk Attack (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will)
The flesh golem makes a slam attack against a random enemy within its reach.

Golem Rampage (standard; recharge ⚅)
The decrepit flesh golem moves its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. When it enters a creature's space, the golem makes a slam attack against that creature.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 7 (+2) **Wis** 8 (+3)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 3 (+0)

Forge Drake (F) **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 300
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)

Claws (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

Shifting Bite (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.

Guard Creature (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)
The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claw attack against that creature.

Force Breath (standard; encounter) ✦ **Force**
Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)
Description: *This winged drake is made of shining steel.*

4 Valsath's Warriors (W)		Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin		XP 75 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 23 (25 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18		
Speed 6		
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.		
⊕ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)		
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.		
Phalanx Soldier		
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin	
Skills Athletics +9, History +5		
Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 16 (+6)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows		

Tactics

If the PCs attack, one hobgoblin warrior bangs on the door to the lab area in desperation (a minor action). The warriors then fight alongside one another to gain the benefit of *phalanx soldier.*

Dakai stays inside the lab and fights from there, launching *rod arc* and *shard orb* at the PCs, since both allow the artificer to ignore a measure of cover. The goblin is eager to put his constructs to the test, and he fights as long as they are still functional. If the golem and the forge drake fall, Dakai can be made to surrender with a successful DC 20 Intimidate check.

The golem and forge drake rush into combat. Both work to protect Dakai, who is the drake's guarded creature. These constructs fight until destroyed.

Features of the Area

Inert Golems: The inert golems are blocking terrain. However, an adjacent character can use a standard action to push over an inert golem (DC 15 Athletics). The golem falls, allowing the pushing creature to make an attack with the golem as the origin: close blast 2; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8 damage, and the target is knocked prone and grabbed. A grabbed creature can escape (DC 19), but cannot stand until it does so. The fallen golem becomes difficult terrain.

Rune: The rune is a font of power. A creature standing on the rune gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with attacks that have the arcane keyword.

Treasure: One parcel.

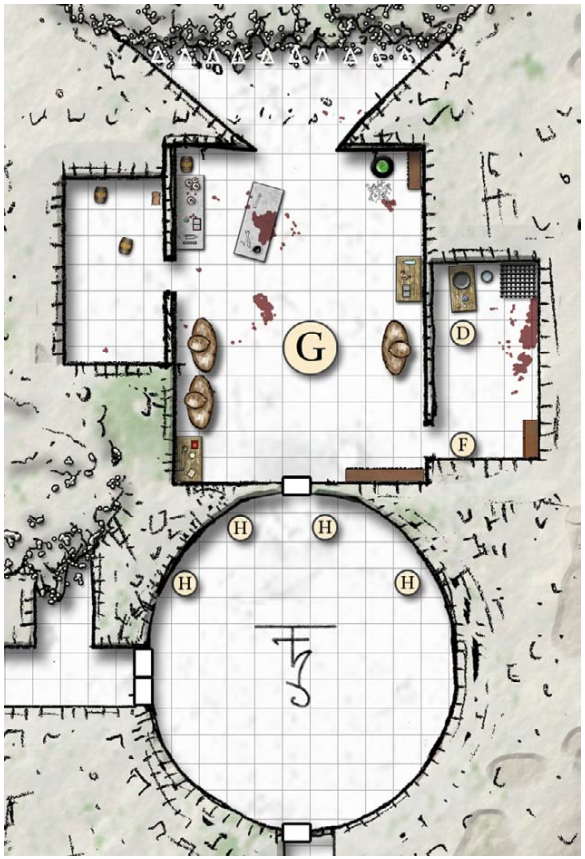
Development

If captured, Dakai knows much of what the goblins in area 1 and 6 knew. He tries to avoid answering questions or lies with Bluff, but in doing so he might contradict facts the PCs already know. For instance, he doesn't admit to being a Bladebearer until the PCs force him to, somehow. This means you might have to edit the facts below until the PCs somehow discover the whole story.

✦ *What are the plans for the forge?* (DC 19) Valsath plans to use the weapons and constructs in the forge for the glory of the Bladebearers. With these weapons, the Bladebearers could rise to power more quickly.

✦ *What about the eladrin, Jelia?* (DC 14) Jelia hired the goblin mercenaries to help her uncover the forge, but she didn't know the goblins were Bladebearers. Valsath turned the tables on Jelia, who is now stuck here. The hobgoblin leader will probably kill the eladrin when the time is right.

✦ *What is this drake construct?* (DC 14) The forge drake, and others like it, comes from deeper in the forge, where Valsath and Jelia found a very powerful weapon called "the Calmachia." Dakai hasn't met Calmachia, but he suspects the "weapon" is an intelligent construct, and he fears that this being has influence over Valsath.



8. Security Gauntlet

Encounter Level 8 (1,750 XP)

Setup

Trap 1:

- ✦ **1 ceiling scythe**
- ✦ **1 razormesh net**
- ✦ **1 whirling blades automaton (B)**

Trap 2:

- ✦ **1 arcane turret (A)**
- ✦ **1 ceiling scythe**
- ✦ **1 razormesh net**
- ✦ **1 whirling blades automaton (B)**

The PCs don't know of the danger here unless they succeed on the required skill checks. Stepping into a numbered area activates a pressure plate linked to all the associated traps (see above). A net launches from a hatch in the ceiling, the ceiling scythes start swinging, and a secret door rises into the ceiling, releasing a whirling blade automaton. The arcane turret activates when either set of traps is activated.

When the PCs enter the hall, read:

This unlit hallway is wide but otherwise featureless.

History Check

DC 20: *Cannith facilities—especially those surrounding creation forges—often have security trap gauntlets in halls such as this one.*

Perception Check

DC 17: *Thin, shallow cuts mark the floor in several places. (These cuts are due to the ceiling scythes.)*

DC 19: *There are slots in the ceiling above the cuts in the floor. (A character who makes a DC 15 Dungeoneering check recognizes these as signs of the ceiling scythes trap.)*

DC 20: *The dust and debris indicate that no traffic of any sort has moved down this hallway in a long time.*

DC 21: *Some of the marble flagstones are slightly raised; they must be pressure plates for a trap.*

When an automaton activates, read:

A construct like a whirling top spins out of a compartment in the wall. Sharp blades spin at its highest point.

Arcane Turret — **Level 6 Blaster**
Trap — XP 250

A crossbowlike contraption emerges and begins to fire magical bolts much like magic missiles.

Trap: When triggered, the trap begins launching bolts of force.
Initiative +6

Trigger
When a creature steps on a linked pressure plate, the trap rolls initiative.

Attack
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Targets: One creature.
Attack: +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d4 + 4 force damage

Countermeasures
- ✦ Arcana or Thievery (DC 20); standard action; three successful checks disables the turret.
- ✦ A character can attack the turret (AC 20, Reflex 20, Fortitude 18; hp 66; immune push, pull, and slide). Destroying it stops its attacks.

2 Ceiling Scythes — **Level 6 Lurker**
Trap — XP 250 each

Scything blades sweep across the hall.

Trap: The scything blades emerge from the ceiling and sweep across the hallway.
Initiative +6

Trigger
The trap rolls initiative when a creature steps on a linked pressure plate.

Attack
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Targets: Each creature in one of the rows of squares in the area the trap occupies. Roll randomly to determine the row the trap attacks on a given turn.
Attack: +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target slides 1 square and is knocked prone. A prone creature takes 1d6 extra damage.

Countermeasures
- ✦ Dungeoneering (DC 19); minor action; the creature can determine which row of squares the trap attacks on its next turn.
- ✦ A character can ready an action to attack a pendulum blade (AC 20, Fortitude 9, Reflex 19; hp 35). Destroying a blade renders one row of squares safe from attack.

2 Whirling Blades Automatons (B) — **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Small natural animate (blind, construct) — XP 250 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1; blindsight 10
HP 66; **Bloodied** 33
AC 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16
Immune disease, knocked prone, poison
Speed 5

Whirling Blades (standard; at-will)
Close burst 1; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the automaton can shift 1 square for each target it hits up to 3 squares.

Remove Mark (minor; at-will)
Close burst 5; +9 vs. Will; the target's mark is removed from the whirling blade automaton.

Bladed Destruction (when reduced to 0 hp)
The whirling blade automaton explodes, launching blades in all directions. Close burst 5; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 6 (+1)
Con 10 (+3) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 2 (-1)

2 Razormesh Nets **Level 6 Obstacle**
Trap XP 250 each

A mesh of sharp steel wire falls from a hatch in the ceiling.

Trap: The net is composed of lightweight steel mesh. It is enchanted to twist and grasp its targets.

Trigger

When a creature steps on a linked pressure plate, the trap attacks. The attack is centered on the triggering creature and occurs only once.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 1
Targets: Each creature in burst.
Attack: +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone and restrained; it is unable to stand and takes ongoing 5 damage while it remains restrained (see Countermeasures). *Aftereffect:* Ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Miss: The target is pushed to an unoccupied square adjacent to the burst.
Effect: The area of effect is difficult terrain.

Countermeasures

- ✦ Acrobatics or Athletics (DC 18); standard action; the creature is no longer restrained.
- ✦ The net can be attacked (AC 20, Fortitude 20, Reflex 2; hp 70; immune to push, pull, and slide). If the net is destroyed, all creatures within are no longer restrained.

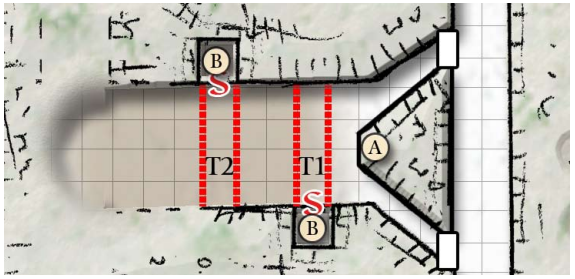
Development

If the characters trigger the traps, the noise likely alerts the creatures in area 13.

Features of the Area

Control Panels: Each set of traps has its own control panel, each of which is under its own hatch (DC 23 Perception to locate) at the far end of the hall adjacent to the arcane turret. A lock seals each panel (DC 21 Thievery to open). Deactivating the set of traps that a panel controls requires three successful DC 21 Thievery checks.

Secret Doors: Each whirling blade automaton is behind a secret door (DC 20 Perception to locate). Opening the secret door without deactivating the associated control panel activates the automaton. The creature then moves and sets off the other trap, which launches its net at the closest PC and releases the second automaton. That automaton then sets off the other trap group, which also launches its net at the closest character. Neither automaton concerns itself with opportunity attacks during this initial action. Then the automatons move to attack as many PCs as possible each round.



9. Ruined Foyer

Encounter Level 7 (1,550 XP)

Setup

1 bone worm (B)
2 tomb mote swarms (M)
1 ghostly flame jets trap

Here in the forge's original entry point, the former overseer and many of his underlings died. His connection to the place makes him aware of intruders who enter it. He can then manifest within if he so chooses. No monsters are apparent when the PCs enter.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens into a large, octagonal room that must once have been magnificent. The large symbol set into the floor still looks impressive, but the southern wall is completely shattered. Rubble is scattered everywhere, and some of the room's southern section is blackened as if by an explosion. A large number of clearly humanoid bones are also strewn about the area.

History Check
DC 10: *The symbol is that of House Cannith.*
Perception Check
DC 19: *Numerous tiny nozzles project from a groove in the room's walls, at least a dozen on a side.*
Arcana Check
DC 19 (success on the Perception check required): *They look like the sort of nozzles that spew magical fire. If they activated, everything in the room would be burned beyond recognition.*

This foyer once contained a deadly security device that could fill the entire chamber with fire. It hasn't been functional since the end of the Last War. If a PC takes a minute to detect magic, a successful DC 21 Arcana check reveals that no magic remains in these nozzles.

After a PC moves into the room, read:

An apparition rises through the floor. It is a translucent human male dressed in the finery of House Cannith. At his heart burns a spectral blue flame. His eyes, mouth, and hair share a similar fire.

"Look who else has come! What are you people doing here in my forge?"

Talking to Haestus

Haestus appears before the PCs mainly to taunt them and to gain information he can pass on to his allies. He talks and asks questions as long as the PCs are peaceful.

The PCs can learn the following information from Haestus, who is arrogant, a little crazy, and confident they have little chance of breaching the forge's lower level. Feel free to reward roleplaying with check bonuses. You can also just give out some information, rather than requiring a skill check.

✦ **Who are you?:** (DC 8 Diplomacy) *"I am Haestus d'Cannith, the overseer of this place. You might already have seen some of my work. The golems? The warforged prototypes?"*

✦ **What are you?:** (DC 19 Diplomacy) *"I am something between living and dead, and greater than either. My power in life allowed my spirit to remain kindled even in death. I am a soul alight with the forge's fire."*

Arcana or Religion (DC 15): Haestus is a forgewraith, an undead creature with fiery powers. A PC can know more per Monster Knowledge Checks, *Player's Handbook*, page 180).

✦ **This is your forge?:** (DC 8 Diplomacy) *"Yes, I am lord over those who died here. The others have the living forge back up and running. Perhaps you'll see, but I doubt it."*

Insight (DC 19): Available only after Haestus mentions "the others" above. Haestus's claim that this is his forge isn't entirely true. Clearly, he has some loyalty to or is beholden to the others he has mentioned.

✦ **Others?:** (DC 16 Diplomacy, or DC 12 Bluff/Diplomacy if the PC mentions Jelia or the hobgoblins) *"Valsath is a cunning leader for a hobgoblin. Her alliance with Calmachia and me will prove fruitful for her people; I have no doubt. I'm not sure I trust that eladrin female. She serves another agenda, I suspect."*

✦ **Calmachia?:** (DC 19 Diplomacy, or DC 16 Bluff/Diplomacy if the PC mentions the forge drakes) *"Ah, yes. She is the heart of the forge and mother of the forge drakes. One day, perhaps, her children will be more like her. The world will know her soon enough, and they will know the name of her father—Haestus d'Cannith."*

When the conversation ends, read:

Haestus cackles. *"Perhaps I'll see you again, but I hope not."* His eyes flash, and pieces of bone around the room tremble. *"Witness, now, my power over the dead things of this forge!"* He sinks into the floor, and as he does, bones dart through the rubble, meeting each other and knitting together. A spectral blue flame lingers in the spot where he was. It pulses, filling the nozzles on the walls with a pale glow, then goes out.

Development

Haestus leaves and warns Valsath that she might expect company, then returns to area 13. If the PCs somehow keep Haestus here, he fights until he can escape (see page 26). Once Haestus vanishes or the PCs attack him, the monsters appear, and they and the trap roll initiative.

When this happens, read:

Whole bones knit to form a sinuous form like a centipede with ribs for legs. A human skull caps the monstrosity. Bits of broken bone, teeth, and ash gather in tiny humanoid shapes that mass in swarms to attack.

Tactics

The monsters initially move to attack the closest creatures, while the trap launches spectral flame at clustered PCs. The bone worm senses and favors as a target any creature taking ongoing necrotic damage. A tomb mote swarm is attracted to areas where it can keep more than one enemy in its aura and still be adjacent to an enemy adjacent to the other swarm. The monsters here fight until destroyed.

Bone Worm (B) **Level 7 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 600
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 158; **Bloodied** 79
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic
Saving Throws +2
Speed 7, climb 4; see also *bite* and *skittering rake*
Action Points 1

Rake (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
The bone worm shifts up to 2 squares before or after the attack; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Skittering Rake (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Necrotic**
The bone worm shifts up to 7 squares and can make two rake attacks during this move.

Combat Advantage ✦ Necrotic
A bone worm deals +1d8 necrotic damage to creatures it has combat advantage against.

Necrotic Advantage
A bone worm gains combat advantage against any creature taking ongoing necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 2 (-1)

2 Tomb Mote Swarms (M) **Level 7 Brute**
Medium natural beast (swarm, undead) XP 300 each
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
Swarm Attack (Necrotic) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 necrotic damage plus 3 extra necrotic damage per tomb mote swarm adjacent to the enemy.
HP 87; **Bloodied** 43
AC 14; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 10
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 against close and area attacks
Speed 6

Swarm of Bones (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 1 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). A creature already taking ongoing 5 necrotic damage instead takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Ghostly Flame Jets **Level 8 Blaster**
Trap XP 350

Ghostly light pulses in the ancient nozzles, and phantom flame silently explodes into existence.

Trap: When the trap is triggered, the flame pulses and attacks each round on its initiative.

Religion
✦ DC 21: The character knows the nature of the ghostly flame jets, including the countermeasures.

Initiative +9

Trigger
When a non-undead creature enters area of the ghostly flame jets, the trap rolls initiative.

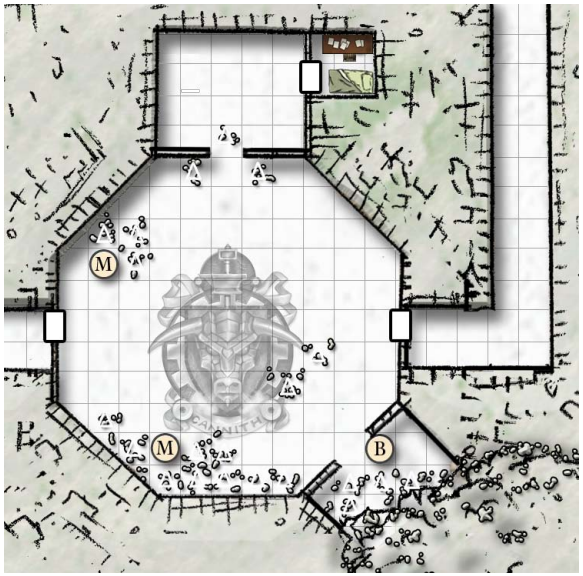
Attack
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10
Targets: Each non-undead creature in burst.
Attack: +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 3 fire damage plus 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Undead creatures in the burst gain 5 temporary hit points.

Countermeasures
✦ A creature can direct radiant damage against the trap, targeting any nozzles on the walls (AC 22, other defenses 20). If the trap takes 8 or more points of radiant damage, it attacks the last creature to deal it radiant instead of making its normal attack: ranged 10; +12 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic and necrotic damage (save ends).
✦ Arcana or Religion (DC 21); standard action; a creature can attempt the check from anywhere in the trap's encounter area. A total of four successes disables the trap. Any failure by 5 or more allows the trap to attack as an immediate reaction.

Features of the Area

Rubble: This is difficult terrain.

Cannith Seal: While a dragonmarked character stands on this symbol, he or she feels a surge of power and gains a +2 bonus to saving throws during this encounter.



13. Catwalk

Encounter Level 9 (2,050 XP)

Setup

2 forge drakes (D)
6 forge wisp wraiths (under lava)
Haestus (H)
1 catwalk deadfall and mesh trap (T)

If the PCs made little noise moving down the hall, they might take the creatures here by surprise. If not, Haestus moves out of sight under the lava when they arrive. Whatever the case, the forge wisp wraiths are out of sight in the lava when the PCs arrive.

When the forge was operational, the trap here was locked in a closed position unless the facility was under attack. Jelia and Valsath leave the trap active, since their lackeys rarely come here and know of the trap's safety mechanism.

When the PCs can see into this room, read:

The marble of the passageway gives way to steel-covered walls and the flicker of fire from below. The hallway opens onto a steel catwalk, which narrows to a 10-foot-wide bridge as it crosses to the other side. Thirty feet below, molten metal churns. A fine mesh is stretched across the room about 10 feet above the chasm, and on it rests charred humanoid remains.

On the far side of the catwalk is a pair of winged drakes made of steel. Their luminous eyes flair at your arrival.

2 Forge Drakes (D) **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 300 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

↯ **Shifting Bite** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.

↯ **Guard Creature** (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)
The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claw attack against that creature.

↭ **Force Breath** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Force**
Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)

6 Forge Wisp Wraiths **Level 7 Minion Brute**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 75 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 19; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Immune disease, fire, necrotic, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Speed fly 6 (hover), phasing

⊕ **Kindling Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
+8 vs. Fortitude; 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

↭ **Explosive End** (when reduced to 0 hp) ✦ **Fire**
Close burst 1; +7 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 4 (+0) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+5)

Haestus (H) **Level 8 Elite Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), foregwraith XP 700

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 123; **Bloodied** 61; see also *bloodied wrath*
AC 20; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21
Immune disease, nonmagical fire, poison; **Resist** 5 fire, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing
Action Points 1

⊕ **Pain Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
+12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Soulburn (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and the target slides 2 squares and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of Haestus's next turn.

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
Haestus makes two basic attacks.

Forge Strike (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends), and the target is knocked prone. Each time a target takes ongoing damage from this attack, the forgewraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

↭ **Forge's Wrath** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation**
Close burst 2; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target believes it is surrounded by fire; if the target leaves its space, it takes 2d6 + 5 psychic damage (save ends). While the target remains in its space, all other targets have concealment against the target. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* Haestus can teleport to any square in the area of effect.

Bloodied Wrath (when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation**
Forge's wrath recharges, and Haestus uses it immediately.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +13, Intimidate +14, Stealth +10
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Catwalk Deadfall and Mesh (T)	Level 7 Warder
Trap	XP 300

The catwalk falls open.

Trap: A 2-square-by-2-square section of floor flips downward, dumping creatures toward the molten metal.

Perception

✦ DC 21: The creature notices the door.

✦ DC 21 (requires the creature to know the door is there): A character adjacent to the door's western side discovers its hidden locking mechanism.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a nonflying creature enters one of its western squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls 30 feet onto the safety mesh, taking 2d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target grabs the edge of the opening or a rail near it (DC 10 Athletics to climb toward a safe square).

Effect: The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden. A creature that starts its turn on the safety mesh takes 5 fire damage.

Countermeasures

✦ Thievery (DC 17); standard action; an adjacent character triggers the trap.

✦ Thievery (DC 21); standard action; an adjacent character works to disable the trap. From the eastern side, this requires two successful checks to jam the door closed. From the western side, this requires one successful check to lock the trap with its hidden locking mechanism.

Tactics

The creatures here make use of their ability to fly to outmaneuver the PCs. Haestus uses his ability to hover to remain out of the PCs' reach when he doesn't want to use a close or melee attack.

Forge drakes prefer to land before attacking. They both consider Haestus to be their guarded creature.

Haestus waits until PCs are on the catwalk. He readies an action if necessary, then emerges to start off with *forge's wrath*. When he uses an action point, he tries to do so when he can unleash *forge's wrath* and *forge strike* during the same turn—or when he can try to knock multiple targets off the catwalk. Haestus is unafraid of melee, but he tries to remain free of attackers so he can use his powerful ranged attacks.

Forge wisp wraiths emerge from the molten metal to harry the PCs.

All the creatures here fight until destroyed.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light from the molten metal.

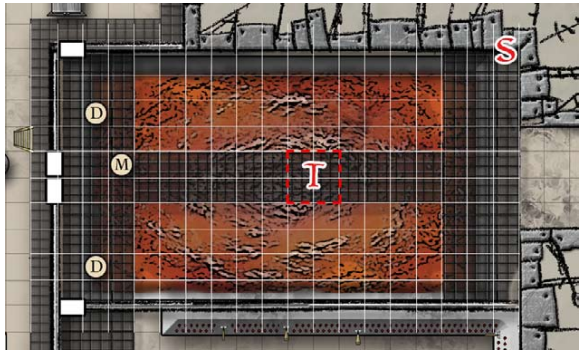
Rails: The catwalk and balconies have rails, which give any creature forced over an edge a +2 bonus to the saving throw to avoid falling.

Safety Mesh: The safety mesh is inches above a sea of molten metal. A creature that starts its turn on the mesh takes 5 fire damage. The charred humanoid form on the mesh was a hobgoblin who fell to his death.

Treasure: When the PCs defeat Haestus, a single corporeal object clatters to the catwalk as he dissipates. His personal House Cannith signet ring is left behind. House Cannith is likely to give one treasure parcel, even a magic item, for the return of this item—as long as the PCs reveal its origin. The characters can gain a smaller monetary treasure parcel from a jeweler or fence, but doing so might offend House Cannith.

Development

Roleplaying Haestus: Haestus taunts and mocks the PCs while the battle progresses. He uses what was said in his earlier meeting with the PCs as a starting point for interactions in this room. The undead artificer also makes it very clear that any undead here exist due to his influence. He is supremely arrogant, and he lingers long enough to be shocked if the PCs destroy him.



14. Disabling the Forge

Encounter Level 7 (600 XP)

Setup

Opening the door here requires a successful DC 20 Thievery check or DC 25 Athletics check.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The walls of this tall room are covered with levers, knobs, runes, and other arcane devices. Lights blink from crystals, symbols glow softly, and the whir and crank of machinery fills the air. A ladder leads from a catwalk at the entry to the floor.

Arcana or History DC 15: These are the primary controls for a creation forge.

Disabling Calmachia's Forge Skill Challenge	**Level 7** XP 600
You need to shut down the forge.	

The PCs can engage in a skill challenge to shut down the forge. Jelia (from area 16) can help them if they've convinced her to betray Calmachia, but her help grants a +2 bonus to the PCs' checks (see also "Success"). The whole skill challenge takes but a few moments.

Complexity
2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills
Arcana, History, Thievery.

Secondary Skills
Athletics, Perception

Victory
Calmachia's forge in area 17 shuts down over the course of a few minutes. It won't complicate the encounter with Calmachia. Without Jelia, the shutdown alerts Calmachia that something suspicious is afoot. With Jelia's help, the shutdown can be delayed until time enough elapses for the PCs confront the dragon.

Defeat
Security countermeasures activate, alerting Calmachia to tampering in the forge controls. The forge can no longer be shut down from this room without some manual manipulation of controls in area 17. See area 17 for details. The controls attack anyone who tampers with them further here: Melee 1; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 lightning damage.

Retrying
If the forge in area 17 is reset, someone here can retry the skill challenge with the successes remaining at the number acquired before the challenge failed but the failures reset to none.

Arcana
DC 19 (1 success, no maximum successes)
The character manipulates the energy in the arcane device. With a few quick gestures and a word, the character forces part of the forge to start shutting down.

History
DC 21 (1 success, maximum 1 success) A success grants a +2 bonus to all other primary skill checks. Further, a character who succeeds on this check knows that attacking the controls is counterproductive.
A study of history has familiarized the PC with the general workings of creation forges. You recall the proper shutdown protocols.

Thievery
DC 19 (1 success, no maximum successes)
It might be arcane, but it's still a device. The character can adroitly sabotage a few important controls or follow protocol instructions to shut part of the device down.

Athletics
DC 19 (no successes, maximum 1 attempt)
The character helps to unjam part of the controls, eliminating one Thievery failure.

Perception
DC 19 (no successes, maximum 1 canceled failure, no maximum attempts for bonus result) Perception can be used to eliminate one Arcana failure or to grant a +2 bonus to one primary skill check.
The character sees the pattern to the glowing crystals, revealing the energy flow in the controls.

Development

If the forge shuts down before Calmachia is defeated, the dragon warns Valsath, who in turn warns Jelia. All these creatures prepare for attack.

15. Arcane Workshop

Encounter Level 8 (1,900 XP)

Setup

2 bugbear wardancers (B)
1 hobgoblin dirge singer (D)
Valsath (V)
6 Valsath's warriors (W)

Valsath is likely to have been warned, so she and her compatriots are expecting company. Due to the dim illumination, the PCs might not see their enemies immediately. Unless the characters are trying to be stealthy, opening the door and entering this room alerts Valsath and her guards to the PCs' presence.

Don't place an enemy's miniature until the PCs see the creature. Some of the guards are out of line of sight.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens onto a metal catwalk. About 20 feet above you is the ceiling, and 30 feet below you is the floor of a vast room of industrial and arcane complexity. Huge, bulky devices of incomprehensible purpose abound. Yawning pits open in the steel floor. Chains dangle from above, some looping on the ground. Some of these items evince signs of life: chains ratchet upward, a device hums, and a crystal sparks fitfully.

Passive Perception
DC 18: *Movement alerts you to lurking creatures.*

Tactics

The goblins prefer to wait until some PCs are on the floor, then they attack. However, the bugbear wardancers climb up to assault those who remain on the catwalk. If they can, they push PCs off the catwalk to the floor. Some of the warriors might also take up positions on the catwalk to fire their longbows.

Valsath, the wardancers, and the dirge singer remain mobile while the warriors tie up the PCs. The dirge singer aids this mobility with *battle chant* and *fateful keening*. While Valsath or the dirge singer is conscious, the rest of the goblins fight to the death.

2 Bugbear Wardancers (B) **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 70; **Bloodied** 35
AC 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Speed 7

⊕ **Flail Dance** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone, and the bugbear wardancer shifts 1 square.

↯ **Flail Barrier** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; targets enemies; no attack roll; 5 damage, and the bugbear wardancer takes half damage from weapon attacks until the end of its next turn.

↯ **Flail Assault** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Combat Advantage
A bugbear wardancer deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Equipment hide armor, heavy flail

Hobgoblin Dirge Singer (D) **Level 6 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 72; **Bloodied** 36
AC 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Speed 5

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

↓ **Grave Cry** (standard; requires a longsword; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target takes a -1 penalty to all defenses against attacks by the dirge singer's allies until the end of the dirge singer's next turn.

↯ **Battle Chant** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞)
Close burst 5; two allies within the burst shift 5 squares and make a melee basic attack as a free action. If an attack hits, the target of the attack is marked by the ally until the end of the dirge singer's next turn.

↯ **Fateful Keening** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Thunder**
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 thunder damage, and the dirge singer pushes the target 2 squares. *Effect:* The dirge singer slides each ally in the blast 1 square.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Diplomacy +12, History +11, Insight +10
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 19 (+7)
Equipment chainmail, longsword

Valsath (V) **Level 8 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin XP 700

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 178; **Bloodied** 89; see also *bloodblade dance.*
AC 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; see also *Dhakaani footwork*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 1d8 + 15), the target is marked until the end of Valsath's next turn.

Scimitar Rend (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 2d8 + 22), and ongoing 10 damage and the target takes -2 to AC (save ends both).

Bladebearer Riposte (immediate reaction, when hit or missed by a melee attack; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Valsath shifts 1 square and makes a melee basic attack against the triggering target. See also *bloodblade dance.*

Bladebearer Finesse (free; usable only while charging; at-will)
Valsath doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of her charge.

Bloodblade Dance (while bloodied)
The use of *Bladebearer riposte* becomes a free action 2/round.

Dhakaani Footwork (free, when Valsath hits with a melee attack; at-will)
Valsath shifts 1 square.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when Valsath becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
Valsath rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +14, Intimidate +10, History +12
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+5)
Equipment plate armor, light shield, scimitar, key to secret trapdoor in area 6, key to area 10, key to area 14

Development

Battle Sounds Carry: Jelia, in area 16, likely hears combat in this room, but she does not come to aid the Bladebearers.

Prisoners: These goblins know everything, although they avoid revealing anything in Valsath's presence. She breaks only under intimidation (DC 20 Intimidation check).

6 Valsath's Warriors (W) **Level 7 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin XP 75 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 23 (25 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.

⊕ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +9, History +5
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows

Features of the Area

Arcane Machinery: The bulky and largely nonfunctional arcane machinery is blocking terrain. Each piece of machinery is about 10 feet high.

Catwalk: The catwalk is 15 feet above the floor, with ladders (DC 0 Athletics to climb; DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics to climb at normal speed) to the floor. Rails here give any creature forced over an edge a +2 bonus to the saving throw to avoid falling.

Chains: Leaping among the chains hanging from the ceiling requires DC 15 Athletics or Acrobatics checks, allowing a character to essentially fly around the room at half speed (+10 to the DC to move at full speed). While among the chains, a creature grants combat advantage to foes, but also has cover.

Noise: The noises in this room impose a -4 penalty to Perception checks.

Pits: These pits were once used to dispose of refuse. They are 20 feet deep (DC 20 Athletics to climb).

Steel Drums: These drums are low (4-foot) obstacles that hold old alchemical reagents and hinder ground movement. A creature can hop atop one as part of a move action with a successful DC 10 Athletics check, treating the square as difficult terrain. A creature can instead use an entire move action to clamber atop one without a check. Otherwise, a steel drum blocks movement into its square.

Treasure: One parcel.

16. Jelia's Refuge

Encounter Level 7 (1,500 to 1,550 XP)

Setup

2 forge drakes (D)
Jelia (J)
1 Jelia's iron cobra (I)

The PCs have a chance to convince Jelia that they can help her, and that she should help them. Doing so is a skill challenge (see Negotiating with Jelia). If the PCs instead attack, Jelia responds in kind.

When the PCs see into the room, read:

A large bank of metal cabinets stands in the center of this rectangular room. Many are open, and objects—mostly construct parts—are spilled onto the floor. Leaning against the eastern wall is a striking eladrin female, regarding you with a tense expression, a rod in one hand and a sword in the other.

An iron cobra in front of her spreads its hood. The female taps it on its head with the rod, but keeps her eyes on you. "Hello, whoever you are." She swallows. "Um . . . who are you?"

Insight Check
DC 14: *Although she doesn't appear frightened of you, this female is clearly a bundle of nerves. She is haggard and rattled, and she sees you as an opportunity to be free of something that is troubling her.*
Perception Check
DC 20: *A scrape against the floor behind the cabinets indicates something is moving back there.*

Negotiating with Jelia **Level 7**
Skill Challenge XP 1,500

It's time to deal with this eladrin—hopefully she will listen to reason.

Jelia is in a poor state. She has all but betrayed Breland—even though she thought she was doing it for the greater good. She allied with evil hobgoblins, plus she unleashed a construct dragon that has turned out to be more intelligent and cunning than she expected. Now she is in this dragon's thrall. She is desperate for a way out of this situation.

Complexity
5 (12 successes before 3 failures)
Special: Jelia might reveal more about Valsath and the goblins, as well as this facility, when the PCs succeed on primary skill checks. She does not, however, reveal Calmachia's existence until the PCs have acquired six or more successes.

Primary Skills
Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate.

Secondary Skills
Arcana, History.

Victory
Jelia thinks PCs have the right of it. She describes Calmachia, the forge area, and the controls. She tells the PCs what to expect and agrees to help them with her skills, but she refuses to face the dragon. ("If she kills you, at least I'll live.") Jelia can help shut down the forge in area 14. She then waits for the outcome. If the PCs are successful, she upholds her end of any bargain.

Defeat
Jelia doesn't trust the PCs. Her best chance is with the hobgoblins and Calmachia, and thus it is her job to eliminate intruders. She attacks.

Arcana
DC 16 (no successes, maximum 1 attempt per PC) This grants a +2 bonus to the character's next primary skill check. This works once for each PC.
As part of another check, the character can impress Jelia with knowledge of magic or insight into Jelia's profession.

Bluff
DC 16 (1 success, no maximum successes)
The character falsely talks Jelia into turning from her course, and Jelia believes those lies.

Diplomacy
DC 16 (1 success, no maximum successes)
The character plays on Jelia's loyalties or honestly promises some form of protection.

History
DC 16 (no successes, maximum 1 attempt per PC) This grants a +2 bonus to the character's next primary skill check.
The character can impress Jelia with knowledge of Breland, the Citadel, or even House Cannith facilities.

Insight
DC 16 (1 success, no maximum successes)
Knowing Jelia fears something, such as the goblins, the character offers aid or otherwise tries to comfort the eladrin artificer.

Intimidate
DC 20 (1 success, no maximum successes)
Jelia might be afraid of something else, but she should be afraid of the party or other consequences.

2 Forge Drakes (D) **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 300 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

↓ **Shifting Bite** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.

↓ **Guard Creature** (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)
The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claw attack against that creature.

Force Breath (standard; encounter) ✦ **Force**
Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)

Jelia (J) **Level 8 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin XP 700

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 176; **Bloodied** 88
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20
Saving Throws +2; +5 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *construct space* and *fey step*
Action Points 1

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the next among Jelia and her allies to hit the target gains a +3 bonus to the damage roll.

Eldritch Discharge (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Close burst 10; Jelia or one ally (primary target) gains a +1 bonus to AC until the end of Jelia's next turn. An enemy adjacent to the primary target is attacked; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 5 force damage, and the enemy is pushed 1 square away from the primary target.

Artificer's Expertise (standard; at-will)
Jelia makes two basic attacks.

Resistive Formula (minor; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Healing**
Close burst 5; allies in the burst gain +1 to AC and can end this bonus as a free action to gain 10 temporary hit points.

Staggering Motes (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Force**
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 force damage, and the target slides 2 squares. It also slides 2 squares each time an attack hits it (save ends).

Construct Space (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
Jelia switches spaces with a construct or living construct within 5 squares. That creature becomes the attack's target.

Fey Step (move; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Teleportation**
Jelia teleports 5 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin
Skills Arcana +16, History +16, Thievery +12
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+8)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, rod, key to secret trapdoor in area 6

Jelia's Iron Cobra (I) **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 250

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 75; **Bloodied** 37
AC 20; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison
Speed 7; see also *slithering shift*

Bite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Poison the Mind (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃)
Ranged 10; affects only creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +8 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both); see also *guard creature*.

Guard Creature
Jelia's iron cobra can use its *poison the mind* power against any creature that has attacked Jelia since the end of the iron cobra's last turn, even if the power hasn't recharged and even if the target isn't taking ongoing poison damage.

Slithering Shift (move; at-will)
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +10
Str 17 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 19 (+7) **Int** 5 (+0) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Tactics

The homunculi move among the PCs, keeping themselves between the characters and Jelia. Jelia is their guarded creature. The iron cobra uses *poison the mind* to keep determined attackers away form Jelia.

Jelia prefers to attack from a short distance, augmenting her homunculi with *eldritch discharge* or using *staggering motes*. She uses her teleportation powers to keep her distance from the PCs or to position herself behind her homunculi.

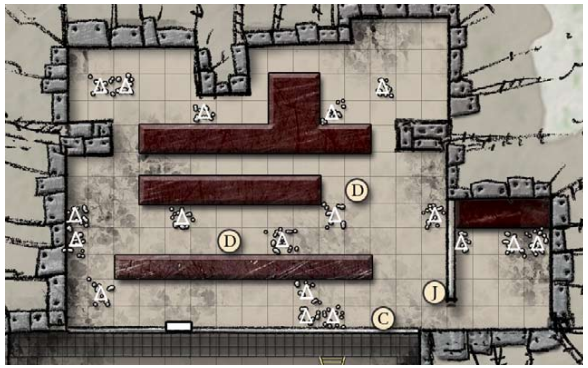
The constructs fight until destroyed, or until Jelia orders them to stand down. When reduced to 40 or fewer hit points, Jelia can be persuaded to surrender (DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate). If she does, she might subsequently help the PCs.

Features of the Area

Cabinets: Cabinets stretch to the ceiling, like walls.

Junk: In some places, the junk is difficult terrain.

Treasure: One parcel. If Jelia has this parcel, she gives it to PCs who succeed on the skill challenge.



17. Wyrm Forge

Encounter Level 10 (2,600 XP) or 9 (2,000)

Setup

Calmachia (C)
Calmachia's Forge

Calmachia dwells here. She has not yet left the forge complex; indeed, she hasn't even left this chamber, because she sees no reason to do so. She works on the forge, hoping to create children superior to the forge drakes she has brought into being.

If the forge is operational, read:

Heat and loud sound pour through the open door. Beyond is a vast arcane workshop that appears to be performing all its functions by itself—gears whirl, levers move up and down, and lightning arcs between rods. Across from the door, an enormous glass hatch reveals red fire on the other side.

If the forge is shut down, read:

Beyond the door is a vast arcane workshop that is dead except for an ambient red light. Gears are still, levers are frozen between positions, and rods that might conduct energy stand quiet and dark. Across from the door, an enormous glass hatch reveals a blackened hearth where no fire lives.

If the forge is working, Calmachia is engrossed in her plans and might not notice the PCs immediately. If the PCs shut down the forge, Calmachia hides behind the forge, preparing an ambush. She is out of line of sight.

When the PCs see Calmachia, read:

As supple as a serpent, a dragon emerges from near the forge. It has flesh made of wood strands, stone plates, and metal scales. Its teeth are like steel daggers, and its eyes flash with blue light. A hint of lightning dances on its steely scales.

"Who enters my forge unbidden?" says the dragon in a voice that vibrates your innards and tickles your mind.

Talking to Calmachia

When Calmachia sees the PCs, she is taken aback. She doesn't attack immediately, but is hostile and suspicious. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can convince her to parley beyond an initial exchange. Otherwise, the draconic construct attacks. When Calmachia chooses not to answer a query, she suggests the PCs are unworthy of the answer or are merely biding their time.

✦ **What are you?:** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"I am Calmachia. I am the forge. The forge is me. But your question is more mundane than this profound truth. I am a construct with sentience beyond your comprehension."*

Arcana or Nature (DC 15): This dragon has traits like those of a warforged. It is a living construct. A PC can intuit more by using Monster Knowledge Checks, *Player's Handbook*, page 180).

✦ **What are you doing here?** (DC 19 Diplomacy) *"I am creating my children. When I perfect the process, I will create others like me, and I will be their queen. I already rule the others here, whom you have likely slain."*

Insight (DC 15): Calmachia's wrath rises at this point. She attacks unless the PCs sense this and appease her with a successful DC 21 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

✦ **What about the others?** (DC 14 Diplomacy) *"Yes, the eladrin and the goblins. They make excellent servants."*

✦ **What are your plans?** (DC 21 Diplomacy) *"I shall go into Darguun to enlist the Bladebearers, and I shall make them great. With others like me, I shall rule over these goblins. Then, according to their history, we shall reforge the Dhakaani Empire form this shattered land."*

Bluff or Diplomacy (DC 23): The PCs can convince Calmachia that they have no problem with her plans. She agrees to let them leave if they agree to do so peacefully. Jelia's release can be part of the bargain.

Calmachia (C)	**Level 9 Solo Controller**
Large natural dragon (living construct)	XP 2,000
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 400; **Bloodied** 200	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21	
Saving Throws +5 (+7 against ongoing damage)	
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	
Action Points 2	
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2, +15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed.	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target slides 2 squares.	
⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)	
Calmachia makes two claw attacks.	
⊕ **Fling** (minor; at-will)	
Targets a creature Calmachia has grabbed; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 6 squares and knocked prone. *Miss:* The target is pushed 2 squares.	
✧ **Arcing Backlash** (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Lightning**	
Close burst 10; targets only the attacker; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 lightning damage, and the enemy is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.	
✧ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Force**	
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 force damage, and the target is slowed (save ends) and pushed 3 squares.	
✧ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Force**	
Calmachia's breath weapon recharges, and she uses it immediately.	
✧ **Commanding Voice** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Charm**	
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +11 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of Calmachia's next turn. *Miss:* The target is dazed until the end of Calmachia's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +13, Intimidate +14	
Str 23 (+10)	**Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 20 (+9)	**Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Calmachia's Forge **Level 7 Elite Warder**
Trap XP 600

The mechanisms around the forge appear to move with a life of their own. Something takes form in the forge's heart.

Trap: The forge reacts to Calmachia's aggression by quickly creating minions to aid the draconic construct.
Trigger: When Calmachia rolls initiative, so does the forge.
Initiative +7

Attack
Standard Action
Create Minion
At the start of each of the forge's turns, two incomplete forge drakes emerge from the front of the forge. This creature is Medium and vaguely draconic. It can act immediately. The minions act subsequently on the forge's initiative count.

Countermeasures
- ✦ Arcana (DC 20); standard action; an adjacent character can reset the controls of the forge, allowing someone to retry the skill challenge to shut down the forge (area 14).
- ✦ A character can shut down the forge in its control room (area 14).
- ✦ Destroying Calmachia deactivates the forge.

Incomplete Forge Drake **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct) XP –

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 22; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17
Speed 6

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the incomplete forge drake can shift 1 square.

Guarding Flash (immediate reaction, when an ally within 5 squares is targeted by an attack that could instead target the incomplete forge drake; encounter)
Targets the creature making the attack; +10 vs. Will; the target must instead make its attack against the incomplete forge drake.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 16 (+6)	**Dex** 19 (+7)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 4 (+0)	**Cha** 4 (+0)

Tactics

Calmachia opens with *commanding voice,* following up immediately with an action point and her *breath weapon.* She bites to grab and *fling* those who deal her significant damage in melee, but only when she cannot use her breath weapon for a similar but more widespread attack. Although she is aggressive with melee attacks, she tries to keep a position near a wall or the forge where it is impossible for PCs to flank her. Calmachia has Haestus's arrogance, and she does not surrender to mortals such as the PCs.

If incomplete forge drakes are emerging from the forge, they rush into melee to protect their "mother." Each one employs *guarding flash* to sacrifice itself for Calmachia's benefit as soon as is necessary.

Features of the Area

Illumination: If the forge is operational, bright light. If it is shut down, dim light.

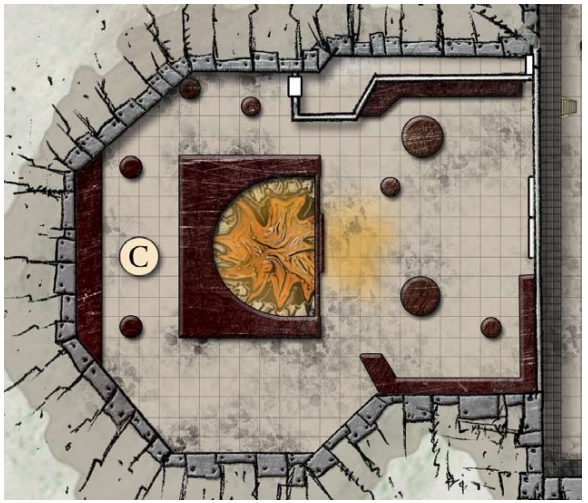
Machinery: These chambers are filled with arcane machinery related to the working of the forge. It is blocking terrain.

The Forge: The forge is behind magically reinforced glass. Behind the glass is only magic fire, and the glass opens only long enough to release its incomplete forge drakes.

Treasure: Two parcels. Part of Calmachia or the creation forge might serve as a magic item, especially an attachable warforged component.

Development

The PCs can force Calmachia to surrender by reducing her to 50 or fewer hit points and succeeding on a DC 23 Intimidate check. At the end of this encounter, the adventure is likely over–see "Conclusion," page 12.



Appendix 1

Forgewraith

A forgewraith is an undead humanoid whose spirit was extinguished and rekindled in the fires of a furnace or forge. Inside it burns a spectral fire and, often, a hatred for the living.

Forgewraith Tactics

Forgewraiths like to see their enemies consumed in fire and pain. A forgewraith attacks while hidden, emerging among its foes to let loose with *forge's wrath*. It then employs basic attacks, perhaps with an action point, to give itself some space to use *forge strike* without danger of opportunity attacks. Even if it might provoke one, the forgewraith is content to rely on its insubstantial nature to mitigate damage from most attacks until it is bloodied.

Forge Wisp Wraith **Level 7 Minion Brute**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 75

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 19; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Immune disease, fire, necrotic, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Speed fly 6 (hover), phasing

⊕ **Kindling Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+8 vs. Fortitude; 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire (save ends).

Explosive End (when reduced to 0 hp)
Close burst 1; +7 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 4 (+0) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+5)

Forgewraith **Level 8 Elite Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 700

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 123; **Bloodied** 61; see also *bloodied wrath*
AC 20; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21
Immune disease, nonmagical fire, poison; **Resist** 5 fire, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing
Action Points 1

⊕ **Pain Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
+12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Soulburn (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and the target slides 2 squares and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of Haestus's next turn.

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
Haestus makes two basic attacks.

Forge Strike (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends), and the target is knocked prone. Each time a target takes ongoing damage from this attack, the forgewraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

Forge's Wrath (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation**
Close burst 2; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target believes it is surrounded by fire; if the target leaves its space, it takes 2d6 + 5 psychic damage (save ends). While the target remains in its space, all other targets have concealment against the target. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* Haestus can teleport to any square in the area of effect.

Bloodied Wrath (when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation**
Forge's wrath recharges, and Haestus uses it immediately.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +13, Intimidate +14, Stealth +10
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Forgewraith Lore

History DC 15: Forgewraiths are born in the fires that feed arcane industry. Although these creatures are not common, numerous individuals are known to inhabit the lava furnaces and abandoned forges below Sharn. Most of these are crazed, soulless creatures that exist only to torment the living.

Religion DC 15: Most forgewraiths form when numerous humanoids die in a fiery disaster on a developed site. The souls pass on, but the pain and fire mixes with unleashed magic to form a humanoid spirit of monstrous hate. Forge wisp wraiths are individual spirits that failed to join together to form a forgewraith.

Although most forgewraiths are amalgams of several spirits instead of a truly sentient and souled undead, some are more like a ghost or specter. Such forgewraiths retain a soul and a personality—frequently that of a person who was evil in life. They speak languages they knew in life, and might retain higher goals.

About the Author

Luke Johnson starts medical school in August 2009, giving him precious little time to keep writing for the Dungeons & Dragons game. If you'd like to tell him what you think of "Heart of the Forbidden Forge," drop him a line at www.lukejohnson.com. He dedicates this adventure to the lovely Lindsay, who will be his wife by the time it is published.

Garaitha's Anvil

By Scott Fitzgerald Gray

An adventure for 17th-level characters

illustrations by William O'Connor, and Empty Room Studio artists-Vince Chui, David Hammond, Jeffrey Koch, Adam Paquette, Wayne Reynolds, James Ryoun, and Frank Wall

cartography by Mike Schley

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"The path of this war and the destruction of all hangs by the thinnest thread, but by the favor of fate and the gods, a light comes to us in our darkest hour. With the power of the Well of Worlds lost to them, the githyanki's assault upon the world will shatter like glass, but we must act now if we hope to prevail. There is no time for caution—no time for fear. Struck with all the force that this Coalition can muster against it, Garaitha's Anvil must fall."

SCALES OF WAR™

"Garaitha's Anvil" is an adventure for five 17th-level characters. By the end of the adventure, the PCs should have attained 19th level. This adventure is the sequel to "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King" in the Scales of War adventure path, or it can be adapted for use in your own ongoing campaign.

In "Garaitha's Anvil," the PCs take on the role of a strike team fighting for the Coalition of peoples standing against the githyanki invasion. However, what appears at first to be a routine mission against a remote outpost reveals how close the githyanki are to completely overwhelming the Coalition's worldly defenses—and shows up a critical weakness in the invaders' plans. By undertaking the dangerous infiltration of a githyanki planar nexus, the PCs have a chance to take the fight to the invaders on their own turf—and to potentially turn the tide of war.

Background

In the aftermath of the previous installment of the adventure path ("Throne of the Stone-Skinned King"), the PCs discovered that Tiamat was secretly behind the githyanki invasion, and that the githyanki controlled a number of outposts previously unknown to the Coalition. One of those outposts becomes the starting point of this adventure when the Coalition receives word of githyanki troops seen in a remote mountain pass.

However, when the PCs investigate, they find not a military outpost but an ancient temple built around an ancient portal called the World Gate. At the fane of Chaniir, they discover that a schism is growing within the githyanki. The majority forces loyal to Emperor Zetch'r'r are under attack by insurgents who oppose the githyanki's invasion of the world, and who know that Tiamat's dark goals underlie Zetch'r'r's ambition.

The Quests

In "Garaitha's Anvil," the PCs take on a strike team role against three different githyanki targets. In the final battle, while the heroes of the Coalition lead a full assault against a planar shipyard, the PCs must capture a githyanki admiral who holds the key to turning the tide of war. Each section of the adventure offers the characters a chance to earn quest XP.

Minor Quest—Free the Faithful of Chanhiir
In a remote githyanki temple known as the Fane of Chanhiir, the PCs discover a faction of githyanki opposed to the invasion and the aspirations of the Emperor Zetch'r'r. By taking out the Zetch'r'r loyalists that have invaded the temple and slaughtered the faithful of Chanhiir, the PCs gain access to the World Portal, which leads to a secret githyanki site known as the Well of Worlds.
Reward: 1,600 XP.

Minor Quest—Capture the Well of Worlds
Arcane secrets gained in Chanhiir give the PCs access to the githyanki planar nexus known as the Well of Worlds. By defeating its guardians and aiding the enslaved eldritch giant who watches over the site, the PCs discover that the githyanki seek to extend the power of the Well of Worlds—granting them limitless access to the world by way of the massive portal network through which the invasion is being waged.
Reward: 2,000 XP.

Major Quest—Capture Admiral Kada'ne and Garaitha's Anvil
To control the Well of Worlds, the PCs need to obtain one of three eldritch keys held by the highest githyanki leadership. One such leader—Admiral Kada'ne—is currently at the githyanki planar shipyard known as Garaitha's Anvil. As the heroes of the Coalition launch a full assault against the site, the PCs attempt to capture Kada'ne and give the Coalition the power to shut down the githyanki invasion.
Reward: 12,000 XP.

The githyanki's mastery of planar travel and teleportation grants them a deadly edge in their invasion of the world, but the full extent of their planar power remains as yet unknown to the Coalition or its heroes. Harnessing power drawn off from the world, the Feywild, and the Shadowfell, the githyanki portal network is powered by a planar nexus called the Well of Worlds.

Within the Well, a teleportation circle known as the Sovereign Gate can teleport creatures to any location in the world or the planes, with or without a permanent teleportation circle at their destination. An ultimately powerful version of a true portal (as created by the ritual of the same name), the Well of Worlds is the site from which elite githyanki scouts and strike teams launch their incursions into the world, and it accounts to a large degree for the githyanki's previous success in the invasion. However, Zetch'r'r has an even bolder plan in hand.

With eldritch craft bestowed by Tiamat and stolen from the giants, the githyanki seek to have the power of the Sovereign Gate extended throughout their entire portal network. From anywhere in their empire, the githyanki can send troops by the

thousands to any location in the world. As their assaults bypass whatever defenses the Coalition can mount, the destruction promises to be absolute. If the githyanki succeed in their plans, no force in the mortal realm can stand against them.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The invasion of the world is in full swing, but the PCs' actions in previous adventures have earned the Coalition critical information regarding the githyanki, their plans, and their allies. As this adventure begins, the Coalition has received word of githyanki troops seen in a remote mountain pass north of Elsir Vale—close to one of the githyanki outposts whose existence was only learned of in the course of "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King."

The PCs (along with the Freeriders) investigate, fearful that this outpost might be the vanguard of a larger assault. Instead, however, the heroes discover a hidden githyanki temple called the Fane of Chanhiir—a monastery whose faithful have rejected the leadership of Zetch'r'r, and who have paid a terrible price for their refusal to bend to the emperor's will.

After routing the invading githyanki and their fomorian servants, the PCs treat with the faithful of Chanhiir, uncovering more of the githyanki's secrets. From the insurgents, the characters hear more of Tiamat's role in the githyanki invasion—and of plots that extend to the ancient war between Tiamat and Bahamut. Additionally, the PCs discover that Chanhiir's central hall is built around a unique portal that feeds planar energy to a githyanki site called the Well of Worlds.

The Well of Worlds is a planar nexus warded by powerful magic that normally allows only githyanki to enter it. However, with the aid and knowledge of their Nefelus allies—particularly the deva mage Bejam—the PCs can adopt a powerful eldritch sigil seen on the githyanki's fomorian allies. The whitefire mark grants the party access to the Well of Worlds, where they undertake a stealth strike-team mission to investigate and neutralize the site.

By freeing the eldritch giant Haryssus—an unwilling servant of the githyanki whose knowledge of planar magic is unsurpassed—the PCs discover that the power of the Well of Worlds fuels the vast network of githyanki portals through which the invasion of the world is being waged.

At the center of that network is the Sovereign Gate—a permanent true portal that can send creatures to any location in the Astral Sea, the world, or the planes. However, more devastating to the Coalition are Zetch'r'r's plans to extend the capability of the Sovereign Gate throughout the entire githyanki portal network. If successful, the githyanki can send troops by the thousands to any location in the world, and the Coalition will be powerless to stop them.

Control of the Well of Worlds is maintained by a set of eldritch keys held by the highest-ranking githyanki war leaders. The githyanki have no fear of these keys falling into the wrong hands, knowing that they can be used only by full-blooded githyanki who themselves have been attuned to the keys with unique rituals. However, with the aid and knowledge of Haryssus, Bejam of Nefelus believes that he can reconfigure a key, potentially giving the Coalition the ability to control the githyanki portal network.

One of the keys is held by Admiral Kada'ne, leader of the githyanki's airship and astral-craft navy. From information gleaned from the rout of the Well of Worlds, the PCs know Kada'ne's current location: the githyanki shipyards known as Garaitha's Anvil. One of Zetch'r'r's most important military sites, the shipyard is a planar mote within which the githyanki and their giant servants craft and repair airships and astral craft in preparation for the final assault on the world.

The PCs determine the location of Kada'ne's flagship, the astral man-of-war *Cev'ren*, but time is of the essence. If the githyanki become aware that the Well of Worlds has been taken, they will launch a counter-offensive that will overwhelm the Coalition's forces. However, when a Coalition war council refuses to authorize the decisive strike against Garaitha's Anvil, it is left to the PCs to take charge.

The Coalition must capture Kada'ne and deliver a knockout punch against Garaitha's Anvil all at once. Under the PCs' leadership, the forces of the Coalition are arrayed in the form of the Hundred—five score of the greatest heroes of the mortal world assembled at the Fane of Chanhiir, and set to undertake a desperate assault at the heart of the githyanki war machine.

The assault is launched—a hundred heroes throwing themselves against a githyanki force ten times their number. However, the PCs have an even more important mission—breaking into one of the shipyard's many repair docks where Kada'ne's flagship *Cev'ren* is moored. The PCs fight their way through the guards and wards of the dock before cutting their way through Kada'ne's defenders. However, when the cowardly admiral takes to the air in *Cev'ren*, the party must follow in a commandeered githyanki strike ship.

In the sky above the shipyard, an immense astral gate flares—the portal through which githyanki ships are launched against the world. Against that storm of white light, a pitched ship-to-ship battle ensues, and the PCs can pursue *Cev'ren* above the hundred fighting for control of the shipyard below. In the end, both ships lock together, out of control and spinning toward the astral gate as the PCs and Kada'ne's forces face off in a final showdown.

Setting

"Garaitha's Anvil" is written in three parts, each tied to a specific location. In Part One, the PCs and the Freeriders infiltrate the remote githyanki temple known as the Fane of Chanhiir, discovering the secret portal that grants them access to the Well of Worlds.

Part Two of the adventure is an assault against the Well of Worlds—a planar nexus that generates the power driving the githyanki's portal network in the world and the Astral Sea.

In Part Three, the PCs lead the assault against the shipyard of Garaitha's Anvil—a planar site from which the githyanki fleets are built and launched. Its capture—and that of the githyanki leader Admiral Kada'ne—promises to turn the tide of war.

Preparing for Adventure

"Garaitha's Anvil" involves a number of important revelations regarding the unfolding plot of the Scales of War adventure path. Even as they take the fight to the githyanki, the PCs face off against githyanki-allied giants and meet a faction of githyanki rebels who have a significant part to play in upcoming adventures.

Additionally, this adventure provides the opportunity for the PCs to take an active role in establishing the goals of the sometimes-fractious Coalition. Although the members of this body are united in their desire to defend the world from the githyanki invasion, infighting and uncertainty runs rampant among its members. As a result, the Coalition often opts for careful measures instead of decisive action.

The adventure can begin in the downtime immediately after the PCs' previous adventure. Go to "Part One: The Fane of Chanhiir" (page 39) when you are ready to begin.

What You Need to Play

This adventure contains everything you need to play, including background information, setup, encounters, and maps. You might wish to review any appropriate Dungeons & Dragons® 4th Edition rules before play begins.

You need to read only the opening sections of the adventure—the introduction and encounters for the Fane of Chanhiir—to begin play. The PCs' incursion into the remote githyanki temple is a four-encounter arc perfect for a single session's play. You can then familiarize yourself with the full importance of the fane and its value to the Coalition, and then with the information the PCs uncover as they interact with the githyanki priest Talanee and her followers.

Using Tactical Encounters

Each encounter includes several common elements, as described below.

Encounter Level

Each tactical encounter assumes a group of five player characters. An encounter of average difficulty is one where the encounter level is equal to the level of the party. Encounters that are 1 or 2 levels lower than the party are easy encounters, while encounters that are 2 or more levels higher than the party are difficult encounters.

For overcoming an encounter, a group earns the XP value noted beside the encounter level. This amount should be divided by the number of group members, with an equal amount awarded to each character.

Setup

This section of a tactical encounter provides you with the basic parameters of the encounter. It gives you a key to the monsters in the encounter so you can locate them on the tactical map, then provides context or background information. The map of each encounter area indicates where the monsters are located when the encounter begins. The setup section also describes what monsters are doing and how they react when the PCs arrive.

Some encounters include monsters that are hidden or that do not appear until later in combat. Do not place those monsters on the map unless at least one PC has succeeded on the Perception check to notice them, or when they enter combat.

Read-Aloud Text

Read-aloud text provides information about what the characters can see and are aware of. You do not have to read it word for word. Especially where read-aloud text is provided in a question-and-answer format, feel free to paraphrase and use your own words when describing the information presented. Use read-aloud text wisely. It is written for the most common approach to a particular situation, but the PCs' actions might require you to alter the information in any number of ways.

Monster Statistics

Encounters include statistics blocks for each monster type present in the encounter. If more than one monster of a particular kind is present, the statistics block indicates how many creatures can be found.

What Is an Adventure Path?

An adventure path is a connected series of adventures that comprises an entire D&D® campaign, from the heroes' humble beginnings at 1st level to their epic triumphs at the pinnacle of level 30. These adventures cover all three tiers of play: heroic, paragon, and epic. Each tier is covered by roughly six adventures, meaning that the entire adventure path consist of eighteen adventures. Each adventure covers between one and three levels, but you can also have the PCs undertake side quests to help supplement XP. This assures that the PCs are the correct level to tackle each adventure.

"Garaitha's Anvil" is the penultimate adventure in the paragon tier, and it continues to bring the PCs firmly into a leadership role in the Coalition fighting the githyanki invasion. Play up the degree to which the members of the Coalition—including the deva Amyria and the Freeriders—are now looking to the PCs for leadership, especially in the section between Part Two and Part Three of the adventure. In the face of uncertainty and bickering by the Coalition, the PCs must step up and demonstrate the bold leadership necessary to turn the tide of war.

This adventure path is meant to be a complete D&D campaign. That means we're making some assumptions about the history and mythology of the world as the adventures progress, such as Queen Vlaakith's death (an event we've adopted from the adventure "The Lich Queen's Beloved" in *Dungeon*® 100). As the adventure path moves into the epic tier, you can look forward to the appearance of some classic heroes and villains from D&D history, as well as great ideas from past issues of *Dungeon* and other sources.

Adapting the Adventure

"Garaitha's Anvil" is designed with five PCs in mind. You can adapt the adventure for larger groups easily by adding additional treasure parcels and monsters using the guidelines presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*®. When adapting the scenario for larger groups, bear in mind that the three sections of the adventure are built around specific conflicts. Adding more githyanki or their giant allies makes better sense in most encounters than randomly dropping in new monsters of different types. In encounters with only one or two creatures, simply increase the level of those creatures using the guidelines on page 174 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This adventure is designed for characters starting at 17th level, but a larger group of lower-level characters should have no problem with the challenges herein. However, the nature of the PCs' strike-team mission limits the party's opportunities to take an extended rest—especially in the final stage of the adventure: the assault on Garaitha's Anvil. Lower-level parties should definitely take advantage of the magic of the pool in Encounter W2 (page 72). In addition, you can give the PCs additional potions created from the waters of the pool in W2, placing them on the githyanki astraan and the githyanki reavers in encounter G1. Alternatively, considering adding a short side trek before this adventure or between Part One and Part Two so that the PCs will have attained 18th level before taking on Part Three—the final assault against Garaitha's Anvil.

If the PC party consists of fewer than five characters, you can adjust the level of the monsters and encounters accordingly. Alternatively, have an NPC ally join the PCs on their initial mission and the subsequent parts of the adventure.

Tactics

This entry describes special actions the monsters take to defeat the adventurers. Sometimes this means the monsters take advantage of special features of the area or make use of special powers or equipment.

Map

Each encounter includes a map keyed with the initial locations of each monster. The map also indicates the location of any special features of the area.

Features of the Area

This section describes special features noted on the map. If the location has items or areas of interest with which the characters can interact, those features are described here. Look here to see if a door is out of the ordinary, if an altar has a secret compartment, and the like.

Part One: The Fane of Chanhiir

The githyanki invasion has seen the PCs undertake a series of increasingly important missions, taking the fight to the invaders even as they try to uncover the secret plots fueling the ambition of the githyanki Emperor Zetch'r'r. Githyanki forces are sweeping across the world, and the situation grows more desperate each day.

In the course of their adventures in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King," the PCs learned of a number of heretofore unknown githyanki outposts within Coalition lands. During their downtime in the aftermath of the previous adventure, activity at one of these sites becomes the catalyst for a new mission.

TREASURE

As with previous installments of the Scales of War campaign, "Garaitha's Anvil" makes use of the parcel system of treasure rewards as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The characters should accumulate twenty treasure parcels by the end of the adventure. You can supply these treasures in whatever way you wish, but the following sidebar presents the most likely encounters to bear treasure.

During your preparation, assign parcels from those that follow to the encounters in the spaces provided. Use the players' wish lists to come up with magic items for the first eight parcels. Consider saving at least one or two of the highest-level magic items for the end of the adventure, which can represent the gear the PCs capture with Admiral Kada'ne.

Parcel A: _____, C1 (carried by the githyanki reavers).
Parcel B: _____, C2 (in the room behind the secret door).
Parcel C: _____, C3 (carried by the fomorians).
Parcel D: _____, C3 (carried by the fomorians).
Parcel E: _____, C4 (carried by the githyanki warmongers and githyanki reavers).
Parcel F: _____, C4 (carried by the githyanki warmongers and githyanki reavers).
Parcel G: _____, W2 (carried by the githyanki strike team).
Parcel H: _____, W2 (carried by the githyanki strike team).
Parcel I: _____, W3 (carried by the eldritch giants).
Parcel J: _____, W3 (carried by the eldritch giants).
Parcel K: _____, G2 (carried by the eldritch giants)
Parcel L: _____, G3 (carried by the fire giant forgecallers).
Parcel M: _____, G5 (carried by the githyanki gish warmasters).
Parcel N: _____, G8 (stored on board Iliyoru or *Cev'ren*).
Parcel O: _____, G8 (stored on board Iliyoru or *Cev'ren*).
Parcel P: _____, G8 (carried by Admiral Kada'ne).
Parcel Q: _____, G8 (carried by Admiral Kada'ne).

Based on the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the following parcels can go in the areas above. Consult the wish lists your players gave you for the first eight parcels, making the items appear to be of githyanki manufacture where appropriate.

Parcel 1: Magic item, level 18.
Parcel 2: Magic item, level 19.
Parcel 3: Magic item, level 19.
Parcel 4: Magic item, level 20.
Parcel 5: Magic item, level 20.
Parcel 6: Magic item, level 21.
Parcel 7: Magic item, level 21.
Parcel 8: Magic item, level 22.
Parcel 9: 360 pp.
Parcel 10: Four mithral amulets (7,500 gp each) and three 1,000 gp gems.
Parcel 11: 220 pp.
Parcel 12: Two astral diamonds and two potions of vitality.
Parcel 13: 1,500 gp, one githyanki icon (7,500 gp), and two potions of vitality.
Parcel 14: Four githyanki ceremonial daggers (1,500 gp each).
Parcel 15: 480 pp.
Parcel 16: 2,000 gp, two gem-studded platinum statuettes (15,000 gp each), and two 5,000 gp gems.
Parcel 17: 290 pp.
Parcel 18: 3,500 gp, a crystal globe set with adamantine filigree (15,000 gp), a jeweled mithral-mesh dagger scabbard (7,500 gp), and three potions of vitality.
Parcel 19: Two crystal and mithral cameos bearing the likeness of Emperor Zetch'r'r (7,500 gp each).
Parcel 20: One 5,000 gp gem, and two potions of vitality.

Trouble in the Mountains

While resting up or taking care of personal business, the PCs receive a message from Amyria or another member of the Coalition they have close ties to. The PCs are most likely in the city of Sayre at the time, but any location in Coalition lands will do.

The message reads as follows:

"Word of githyanki activity comes in from across all frontiers, but we have had one report that demands quick investigation. The watchtower at Thiradith marks the northernmost frontier of our settled lands and is within striking distance of one of the outposts we learned of from your work in the fomorian Cachlain's court. Three days ago, riders there reported seeing githyanki along the mountain passes. Their numbers were small and they've shown no sign of wanting to engage the outpost, but that has created even more worry in the watch commander. As is the case in every corner of the frontier, rumors of ancient ruins in the mountains have him convinced that the githyanki seek some weapon or relic to give them even more advantage in this war.

"I do not share his fear, but githyanki scouts in the northlands are reason enough for worry. There are precious few resources for us to lose in those wild lands, but this unknown outpost might too easily become a staging ground for the githyanki's next assault. The guards at Thiradith are raw recruits and veterans whose injuries keep them from the front lines. They can bolster the barricades well enough, but they are ill-suited to hunting githyanki in hostile terrain. As such, they have sent a plea for aid to all the agents of the Coalition. It might well be that you meet up with others when you get there, so share the assignment as you see fit. We must find out what kind of presence the githyanki have in the northlands."

The PCs can finish up whatever business they have at their present location before heading north. The party is instructed to send word by way of Sending when they have discovered (and hopefully thwarted) the githyanki's plots. (The message came with ritual scrolls if none of the PCs has mastered Sending.)

Thiradith

The watchtower of Thiradith is a rebuilt ruin of Nerath, and it has watched over the empty northern frontier for a generation.

The three-day journey to Thiradith is uneventful. These remote badlands are uninhabited and far removed from the front lines of the invasion. Wolves and crows are the only company on the road, but these give you a wide berth as you make your way north.

Just before sunset, you see the watchtower in the distance. An upthrust embankment of sheer stone wall atop a white bluff, the site commands a sweeping view of the rocky scrubland that spreads to all sides. A gate and drawbridge allow access across a steep-sided ravine that protects the site on all sides. Sun-faded flags fly high above the ramparts, and the bridge is already down as you approach.

The watchtower is a small outpost with a permanent population of forty human and half-elf members of the border militia. Birkeni, a veteran half-elf fighter, is captain here. He meets the PCs at the gate, making no effort to hide his relief at seeing them. There are no stores or services here, but Birkeni offers free use of the outpost's amenities (weaponsmith, armorer, and so on) and semiprivate accommodation in the barracks hall.

However, upon their arrival in the hall, the characters discover that they are not the first to respond to the watchtower's summons. Megan Swiftblade and the Freeriders are already here, having arrived from a recent mission to the west that morning.

Though Megan has lost none of the pride she has demonstrated in her previous meetings with the PCs (in "Siege of Bordrin's Watch," "The Temple Between," and "Beyond the Mottled Tower"), her dedication to the Coalition has tempered that pride with purpose. However, the party's reaction to the presence of the Freeriders (and the NPCs' reaction to the PCs) likely depends on what transpired between both groups in their previous meetings. Roleplay the interaction as you see fit, but if things threaten to turn ugly, Birkeni pulls rank to remind all the characters that there are more pressing matters at hand.

Old Friends?

This section of the adventure assumes that the PCs and the Freeriders have at least a neutral attitude toward each other. However, this might not be the case insofar as events played out in your own campaign.

Depending on the relationship between the two groups, paraphrase or rework the read-aloud text and the setup to the adventure as necessary. The Freeriders need to be part of the assault on the temple with the PCs. However, in a worst-case scenario in which both groups are openly antagonistic toward each other, have them journey separately to the site. Then let the PCs find only the one entrance, not knowing that the Freeriders are also in the temple until they meet up again in Encounter C4.

You and the Freeriders are honored guests at that night's mess, but the mood is more somber than celebratory. Over a meal of military rations, heavy bread, and ale, Birkeni speaks. "I told your compatriots this morning all that I can report beyond what was sent in our missive. A week ago, one of our patrols found three dead githyanki within a hundred strides of each other on one of the foothill tracks. The mudskins had been in some sort of fight by the look of them, but as the scouts came back to report, they were shadowed by a half-dozen more githyanki, very much alive. Followed them to within sight of the watchtower, then fell back into the hills again."

This is the first githyanki sighting in this area. In the intervening week, the watchtower has seen no further sign of the githyanki, though no patrol has ventured into the foothills again for fear of ambush. Birkeni has no idea what killed the githyanki that the first patrol found, and no bandits or monsters are in the region. The PCs might immediately speculate that these were two groups of githyanki fighting each other, but this only feeds the captain's belief that the githyanki seek some mythical relic hidden within the mountains. Birkeni is dead wrong as regards the githyanki's motivation for being here—but in the end, the PCs can discover that the hidden outpost holds an even greater treasure.

Unless the PCs have business to conduct in the fortress or with the Freeriders, Birkeni hopes they intend to set out the next morning.

Into the Hills

The patrol trail from the watchtower to the foothills is easily followed, winding through thin stands of jack pine and patches of scrub grass that slowly disappear as the rocky ground begins to climb. The day is overcast as you reach a marker Birkeni spoke of—a great arch of rust-colored stone, beyond which the wall of the mountain begins to rise. It doesn't take long to locate the site where the githyanki were found—three patches of blood-stained rock on the trail winding roughly up. Of the bodies, there is no sign.

The githyanki that fell here were the faithful of Chanhiir, fleeing from the temple when they were cut down by a force of invading githyanki. A DC 25 Perception check made to search the area shows signs that the bodies were picked up and moved. The githyanki's week-old tracks are undetectable in the rubble and scree of the foothills, but finding the track leading to the temple takes only a DC 20 Perception check or a few hours' searching.

By Birkeni's description, you are already well past any of the watchtower's patrol routes when you happen across a faint trail cut into the rocky ground. A set of rough steps have been carved into a wall of crumbling shale, leading to a narrow track twisting off into the shadows of the adjacent cliffs. Ahead, a bluff of black stone rises like a broad spike in the cloudy gloom.

Approaching the Fane

Let the PCs take whatever precautions they wish, but they and the Freeriders are in no danger of being spotted as they approach. Flush with recent victories in their invasion and confident in the security of the fane's remote location, the invading githyanki have established a watch only at the two entrances to the temple.

If the githyanki who dwell at this remote location are vanguard scouts, they show very little aptitude for it. With no patrols in sight, you have clear run of the trails that wrap around the black stone bluff on both sides, easily spotting two caverns that might be entrances into some sort of complex within. These lie on opposite sides of the bluff, out of sight and sound of each other. However, the echoes of the surrounding cliffs give you warning of the guards stationed at both locations even before you see them—githyanki voices, arguing and laughing in Deep Speech. Whatever the origin of this force, its members seem to have no interest in hiding their presence here.

With no patrols around the area of the fane, the PCs and the Freeriders can easily split up to approach both entrances separately, preventing flight or a potential ambush from behind if the entire group goes in the same entrance. Give the players a chance to devise this divide-and-conquer strategy, but Megan Swiftblade can suggest it if no one else does.

The Freeriders salute as you take your leave of each other, heading along the low track that will bring you separately within sight of both entrances.

The approach to the fane is detailed in Encounter C1 on page 59.

Fane of Chanhiir Encounters

The PCs' infiltration of the temple is a quick-strike assault undertaken in conjunction with the Freeriders, with both groups fighting their way in from opposite entrances before meeting in the middle.

Areas that are not part of tactical encounters (including the areas in the Freeriders' side of the incursion) have been left for your development. Use the following table to generate area contents or ideas of your own.

1d6	Details of the Fane
1	Former living quarters, ransacked (bedrolls, prayer mats, robes)
2	Mess hall (tables, benches, trenchers, mugs)
3	Stores (foodstuffs, water barrels, cloth, rope, wool, whetstones)
4	Prayer room, ransacked (benches, prayer mats, icons or symbols of Queen Vlaakith)
5	Library, ransacked (githyanki religious texts and histories)
6	Formerly empty, now filled with the rotting bodies of the faithful of Chanhiir (ninety corpses in total)

Unless the PCs tarry too long outside the encounter areas (including any attempt to take an extended rest), no random encounters occur in the fane. If the PCs spend more than 1 hour in any area, a patrol consisting of a githyanki mindlasher and three githyanki warmongers finds them. Use the statistics blocks from Encounter C2.

C1: Cavern Entrance

The twisting mountain paths that wind around the bluff lead to the temple's two cavern entrances. The Fane of Chanhiir has no north-south orientation given so that the map has no bearing on the PCs' choice of which entrance to take. Whichever entrance the party chooses is automatically the one at lower right on the map, with the Freeriders taking the opposite entrance.

Tactical Encounter: C1. Githyanki Watch (page 59).

C2: Hall of Heroes

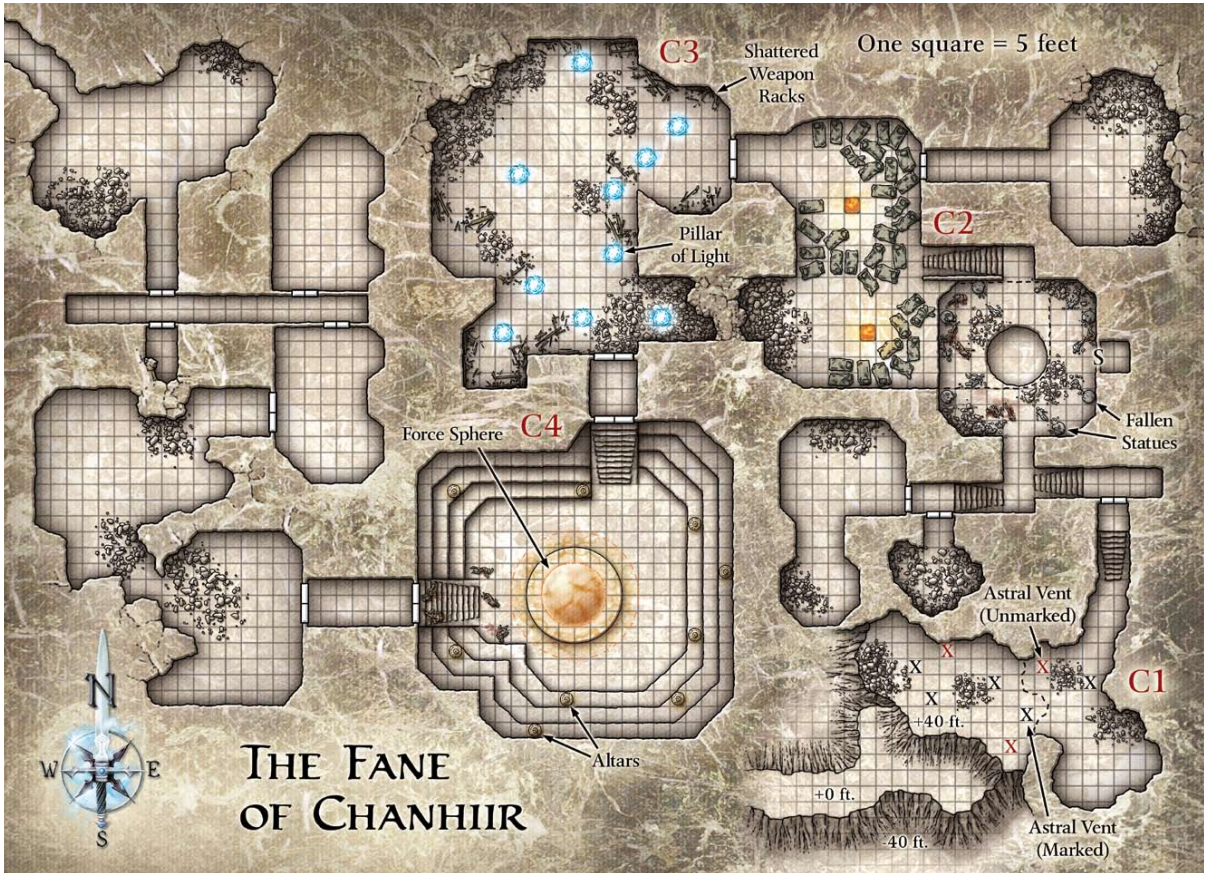
This mausoleum has been the resting place of the honored dead of Chanhiir for generations. When they invaded, Zetch'r'r's githyanki pulled down a dozen statues that once lined the walls here. However, in doing so, they have drawn down the wrath of vengeful spirits that now haunt this place.

The secret room is empty, but it can be used as the location for any treasure placed here (see page 40).

Tactical Encounter: C2. The Watch of the Dead (page 61).

C3: Training Ground

This chamber was once a training ground for the githyanki of the temple. The only survivors of the assault on Chanhiir—ten ranking githyanki leaders and priests—are due to be taken to the githyanki capital of Tu'narath for trial and execution. However, the invaders cannot leave until the Chanhiiri reveal how to reverse the wards locking down the World Gate in area C4.



The Chanhiiri's warders are two fomorians whose presence here reflects the alliances the PCs learned of in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King." In the aftermath of this encounter, the PCs learn some of the secrets of the fane and hear of factions within the githyanki empire fighting against Zetch'r'r's rule.

Tactical Encounter: C3. Prisoners of Chanhiir (page 63).

C4: Portal Hall

The center of the temple is a terraced chamber built around the World Gate—a unique teleportation circle that funnels planar energy to the Well of Worlds. As the PCs meet the Freeriders fighting their way in from the other side, both groups fight alongside the Chanhiiri in a climactic showdown that routs the githyanki invaders.

Afterward, the PCs learn more about the Well of Worlds as they hear hints of the plots underlying the githyanki invasion—plots that expand on the knowledge of Tiamat's involvement in the events of the adventure path, and that hint at an epic struggle between Tiamat and Bahamut.

Tactical Encounter: C4. Portal Hall (page 66).

Enemies and Allies

Two groups of githyanki are presently in the temple—the faithful of Chanhiir, the last of which are prisoners in area C2; and the invading forces loyal to Emperor Zetch'r'r that attacked the fane and slaughtered the Chanhiiri that dwelt here. The invaders' motivations are explained after the PCs have successfully treated with the priests that are all that remain of Chanhiir's faithful. See "Secrets of the Fane" for more information.

The githyanki and fomorians who have occupied the temple speak Deep Speech among themselves and to their prisoners, and there are several points at which the PCs can overhear their conversations. If none of the party know Deep Speech, paraphrase those sections of read-aloud text as necessary, then make sure that the Freeriders or the githyanki priest Talanee fill in the information the PCs miss.

Much of any treasure you place in these encounters is the wealth of the Chanhiiri, captured by the invading githyanki. However, Talanee and her followers are set to abandon the fane, and they are content to let the PCs keep their former riches. See "The Chanhiiri's Fate," page 45, for more information.

Secrets of the Fane

With the githyanki invaders routed, the Fane of Chanhiir is safe from further incursion. However, the discovery of this secret site and the knowledge of its priests prove to be an unexpected boon in the war against the githyanki.

The PCs might investigate the strange sigils on the wrists of the fomorians in area C3, or they might leave that investigation to Bejam and the mages of the Coalition in the next section. If they mention the marks to the Freeriders, they are told that the dead on the other side of the fane include three more fomorians, all bearing the same sigil. See "The Whitefire Mark" sidebar (page 45) for more information.

In the aftermath of the previous encounter, the PCs can take the opportunity to further explore the fane and to learn more of the history and purpose of this site from Talanee and her followers.

(If the Chanhiiri did not survive a confrontation with the party in Encounter C3, or if the PCs allowed them to march alone to their deaths in Encounter C4, the information in this section can be uncovered by a careful search of the portal hall and the prayer chambers and libraries scattered about the temple; see "Details of the Fane" on page 43. If you wish to impress upon the players the usefulness of not killing potential allies, make them undertake an improvised skill challenge or face an elite trap or hazard before gaining all the information presented here.)

Talanee is grateful to both the PCs and the Freeriders for their aid in defending the fane. After filling the PCs in on any information they missed in Encounter C3, she provides more information on the fane and the World Gate.

What was behind the fomorians' threats? What did the invaders need from you?

"The Chanhiiri's task is to keep watch over the World Gate for the githyanki, but in making our opposition known to the plots of the false emperor Zetch'r'r, we were first shunned, then assaulted. However, our craft allowed us to seal the gate in ways that Zetch'r'r's thralls could not overcome."

What is the World Gate?

"The World Gates are the prime portals through which the githyanki first mastered the connections between planes. This World Gate is set within the mortal realm, with others in the Feywild and the Shadowfell. More distant gates in nameless planes are whispered of, but they are beyond my knowledge."

What are the World Gates? How are they different from other permanent teleportation circles?
"The World Gate functions as a portal in the same manner as any teleportation circle. However, the ancient magic of the World Gates sees them also act as anchors that connect their realms to the Astral Sea. They are siphons for planar energy, feeding it back to the Well of Worlds."

What is the Well of Worlds? What is its importance to the githyanki invasion?
"The Well of Worlds is a site of powerful planar magic, built by Chanhiir in the lost age of our race and open only to those of githyanki blood. It is a planar mote existing in no world–fueled by the energy of the Astral Sea but not set within it. The Well of Worlds is the center of the portal network that is the lifeblood of the githyanki empire. It is the site through which elite githyanki strike teams travel the planes, including the force charged with seizing the fane. It is a place that touches all other places–all planes of existence, all sites in those planes. From the Well of Worlds, the githyanki have access to anywhere in all of creation."

In game terms, the Well of Worlds is a permanent and freely used true portal, as created by the ritual of the same name. See "The Sovereign Gate" sidebar, page 51, for more information.

The Chanhiiri's Fate

With the invaders overthrown, the surviving faithful of Chanhiir attend to their dead. With the bodies badly decomposed and too numerous to easily move, the githyanki consecrate the empty chambers into which the invaders piled the corpses, then seal those areas up behind walls of loose rock. (The PCs' assistance in this effort is welcomed but not asked for.)

The Whitefire Mark

The whitefire mark is a mystical sigil implanted only in the most trusted servants of the githyanki–those granted access to the Well of Worlds. The sigils are a permanent magical brand that burns with a white flame powered by the bearer's own life force. A mark goes black when its possessor dies, but its magic remains potent for up to 24 hours. (This is what allows Bejam to recreate the whitefire mark for the PCs; see the next section.) A creature raised from the dead within that time retains its mark.

Talanee knows what the whitefire marks are and how they function. PCs who have established an alliance with the Chanhiiri are told the above information in this part of the adventure. For others, a DC 20 Arcana check made on an active mark or the mark of a creature dead less than 24 hours identifies the sigil as an arcane token allowing a creature to make use of a powerful magic relic or effect that would otherwise be warded against it. A DC 25 Arcana check reveals the full nature of a whitefire mark. Alternatively, Bejam can reveal the information in the next section.

This extended burial takes a day. When it is done (but only after the PCs have gleaned all possible information from Talanee), the githyanki announce their intention to leave the fane.

"This holy place has lost its sanctity, debased as it is by the blood of Zetch'r'r's traitors. Our fate lies elsewhere now."

Though the PCs do not know it, Talanee and her followers have a larger part to play in the adventure path. The surviving Chanhiiri are loyalists to the lich Queen Vlaakith, who returns in the next installment. However, this information is not something that Talanee shares with the PCs under any circumstances.

The Chanhiiri plan to leave this place by way of the World Gate in area C4. Doing so means shutting down the force field, allowing the PCs to make use of the portal but leaving the fane vulnerable to another githyanki incursion. The need to defend the fane and to avoid attracting the githyanki's attention underlies the next two sections of the adventure.

Before she and her followers depart (or in response to specific questions if the PCs have them), Talanee shares important information regarding a discovery made in the previous installment of the adventure path–the fact that Tiamat is behind the githyanki invasion of the world.

"Zetch'r'r is a dog leading dogs, but those who lash themselves to his leash see not the chains he wears. The false emperor talks of rebuilding the glory of the githyanki, but he is a pawn of forces he has not the mind to understand or the will to stand against.

"In the long eons since the gods and primordials fought for control of all creation, Bahamut and Tiamat have undergone a never-ending sibling war. Driven apart yet drawn constantly together by their dichotomous natures, the two gods fight endless battles, both face to face and through their proxies in all the many worlds. Among all races, long ages of peace follow epochs of tyranny as each deity ekes out a temporary victory over the other, but in the end, always, the battle continues. Until now.

"In this age, a new war looms between these two ancient adversaries. On both sides, armies amass across worlds in preparation for brutal conflict, but Tiamat means to see that this battle with Bahamut is the last. The dragon queen seeks to slay the platinum lord, and Zetch'r'r has sworn himself and the githyanki to the service of this dark goal."

Tanalee is not yet certain what role the githyanki play in Tiamat's plan, but the intelligence she shares has been gathered by other githyanki insurgents, often at the cost of their lives. Though she stands steadfastly by her claims, she does not reveal the source of her information, stating only that many githyanki are united in their hatred of Zetch'r'r. See the "Truth and Consequences" sidebar for more information.

Talanee's information has hopefully earned the Chanhiiri enough trust that the PCs let them go. If not, the githyanki fight (most likely in vain) to earn their freedom. See "Shoot First, Ask Questions Later" (page 65).

PART TWO: THE WELL OF WORLDS

The Well of Worlds is a planar nexus at the center of the githyanki's extensive network of portals across the Astral Sea, the world, and the planes. The Well is the site of the Sovereign Gate—an ancient and powerful teleportation circle that serves as a transit point for elite githyanki strike teams and scouts at the vanguard of the ongoing invasion. More importantly, the Well of Worlds is the center of a bold arcane experiment being undertaken on the orders of the githyanki Emperor Zetch'r'r—an experiment whose success will spell doom for the free peoples of the world.

The Well of Worlds and the Sovereign Gate are located in a planar nonspace, and they are protected by magical wards that prevent any but full-blooded githyanki and their most trusted servants from accessing them. These wards make the Well of Worlds unassailable—or so the githyanki think.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

The information that Tanalee presents builds on what the PCs learned of Tiamat's involvement in the githyanki invasion in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King." However, Vlaakith's githyanki agents do not yet understand the full scope of Tiamat's plans. As a result, the priest's tale contains a significant bit of misinformation.

In truth, Tiamat's plot to kill Bahamut does not rely on the githyanki under Emperor Zetch'r'r. The githyanki invasion of the world is merely a subterfuge—a deadly feint with which Tiamat hopes to distract the attention of Bahamut and his faithful while she pursues the ritual that will allow her to summon the Platinum Dragon in mortal form.

If asked, Tanalee knows nothing about the other information the PCs discovered in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King"—in particular, the existence of the exarchs of Tiamat. This should tell the PCs that Tiamat's plots are more convoluted than they might have previously suspected, and that unraveling those plots will take on prime importance in the future.

If the PCs are suspicious of Talanee, they find orders on one of the githyanki warmongers from Encounter C4 corroborating what they learn here regarding the World Gates and the Well of Worlds. However, they find no information supporting what she tells them regarding the war between Tiamat and Bahamut, nor of the githyanki's place in that struggle.

THE WORLD GATE

A unique ritual dispels the force field around the World Gate. With its wards deactivated, the World Gate functions as a permanent teleportation circle with a sigil sequence the PCs can read easily. In addition, the World Gate features a permanent link to the Sovereign Gate in the Well of Worlds and can act as the focus for any scrying ritual. Both these features prove useful to the PCs later in the adventure.

Any Arcana check reveals that the portal has additional epic-level powers. However, that same check tells the PCs that unlocking or controlling those powers is beyond their skill. One of the characters will likely make the obvious suggestion to seek assistance from the deva Bejam and the powerful mages of Nefelus. However, one of the Freeriders can raise the idea if need be.

With the force field down, the Chanhiiri step into the portal and are gone. The location the githyanki teleport to is beyond the scope of this adventure. If the PCs attempt to note the sigil sequence of the Chanhiiri's destination, it is coded and made unreadable by the power of the World Gate.

Word to the Coalition

Before or after the Chanhiiri depart the fane, the PCs can use Sending to report to their contact in the Coalition (likely Amyria). Assuming they report everything Tanalee has told them, the PCs receive the following in return:

Secure the fane as best you can. Get word to Thiradith. Make another Sending to me with the portal sigils. Wait for our arrival.

An hour after the PCs make the Sending with the World Gate's sigil sequence, Amyria and a dozen heroes loyal to the Coalition step through the World Gate. With them is Bejam, the deva mage the PCs befriended on Nefelus in *Dungeon* 165. Depending on whether Bejam accepted a position on the Coalition in that adventure, this might be the first time the PCs have seen him since then. In any case, Amyria has asked him to accompany her, believing that his advanced arcane knowledge will be of great benefit.

The PCs are left in charge of establishing defenses and organizing a watch over the fane. The Freeriders and the newly arrived heroes look to the PCs for direction in establishing patrols, scouting the best lookout locations, and keeping a force on alert in the portal hall in case any githyanki come through the World Gate.

The githyanki do not make a return appearance at the fane in this adventure, but don't let the PCs know that. Use this opportunity to give the characters a sense of the respect their previous escapades have earned in the eyes of the growing number of heroes loyal to the Coalition. This relationship becomes an important aspect of the third part of the adventure.

While the PCs set up the security arrangements for the fane, Bejam gets to work investigating the World Gate and poring over the lore in the fane's libraries. The PCs have time to take an extended rest and look after any remaining business in the fane or at the watchtower. Afterward, Bejam summons them and Amyria for a troubled council.

What Lies Beyond

Bejam calls the PCs to one of the empty library chambers in the fane, explaining that he does not want the things he has learned to become common knowledge yet. He has developed some understanding of the operation of the World Gate and the existence of the Well of Worlds, but what he has learned has put him on edge.

"The githyanki priest spoke truth regarding the World Gates. The circle here siphons the planar energy of the mortal realm, drawing it to a site beyond. This Well of Worlds is spoken of in the lore here, but the fact that the githyanki have kept the site secret even from Nefelus demonstrates its importance. Indeed, the existence of the Well and its power goes some way toward explaining the advantage the githyanki have gained in this war."

If any of the information meant to be revealed by Talanee remains unknown to the PCs (most likely because they slew the Chanhiiri before they could hear it), Bejam can fill it in here.

"If the Well of Worlds was merely as this Talanee described it—a portal for moving the githyanki's elite forces—I would wish to know more of it. However, the brief period of my study here has shown that the World Gate is drawing off planar energy greatly in excess of its normal operation, according to the githyanki's lore. From what the Chanhiiri said, Zetch'r'r had specific purpose in seizing the fane, and I am fearful as to what that purpose might be."

Let the PCs suggest that a mission through the World Gate to the Well of Worlds is in order. However, as important as it is to see what the githyanki are up to, the Coalition cannot afford to have the githyanki discover that their secrets have been compromised. As such, sending in a small group is the best strategy.

If the PCs are not inspired to volunteer for this mission, Bejam actively recruits them. However, the PCs heard from Talanee that only full-blooded githyanki can access the Well of Worlds. Thankfully, Bejam has discovered another of the githyanki's secrets.

"The whitefire marks borne by the fomorians are crafted by potent ritual magic the like of which I have never seen before. By this magic, those who bear the marks carry the essence of the githyanki within them. If the fomorians you fought traveled here by way of the Well of Worlds, the whitefire marks were their passage. The githyanki no doubt feel secure that the secret of the sigils is protected from those who might seek to subvert it. However, they have not reckoned with the craft of Nefelus."

From the lingering power in the fomorians' sigils, the whitefire mark can be recreated. Those who bear the mark can make the journey to the Well of Worlds. However, time is of the essence.

"I do not know how long the githyanki will await the return of their forces from the fane, but if they discover us here, their retribution will be swift. We must send word to the Coalition for reinforcements to hold the fane in the event of another githyanki assault. For my part, I will convince Nefelus to send more aid of its own. If the worst comes to pass, we can hopefully hold the fane long enough for you to discover what the Well of Worlds is—and what kind of threat it represents."

Megan Swiftblade and the Freeriders take charge of the watch in the PCs' absence, even as more defenders travel by way of the World Portal to the fane. See Part Three of the adventure for more information on these heroes of the Coalition.

The ritual by which the whitefire mark is bonded to a living creature seems simple enough, but the exertion that shows in Nefelus when he is done shows the potency of the magic that has been imbued in you. As the ritual is completed, the sigil flares to life on your wrist, its outline of white flame writhing around the stark lines of a githyanki blade. Though the mark can be covered by sleeve or armor easily enough, you feel its flame still flaring—pulsing in time with the beating of your heart.

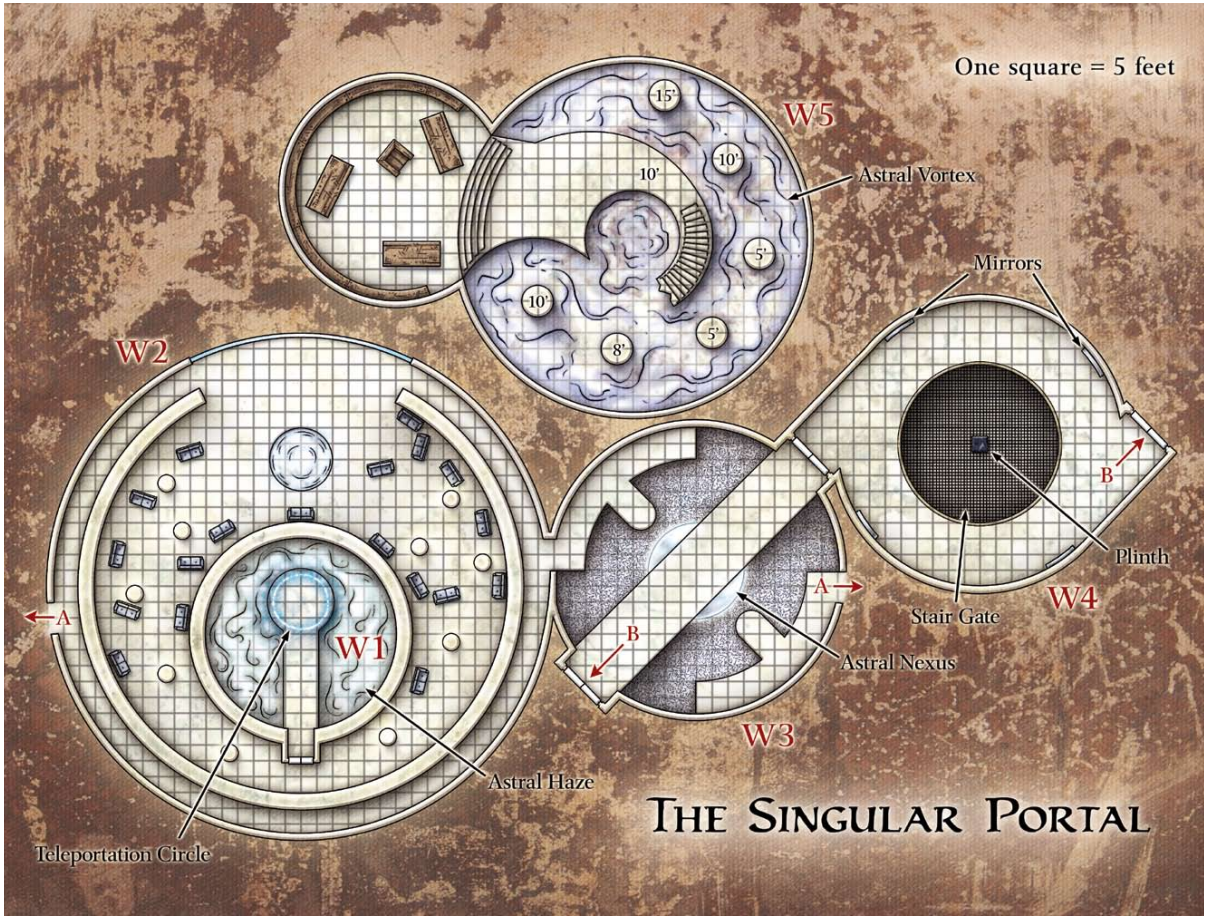
While the ritual is completed, a pair of Nefelus mages recently arrived at the fane have been studying the shadowy destination beyond the World Gate. As the PCs prepare to embark, the mages brief them.

"Beyond the World Gate lies a portal the likes of which we have not seen before. It has no sigil sequence. Rather, its location is fixed by psychic energy and the flow of planar power through it. A force of githyanki a half-dozen strong arrived there only an hour ago, but we have seen no other traffic before or since."

When the PCs are ready to step through the World Gate, go to Encounter W1 on the next page.

Well of Worlds Encounters

The githyanki's belief that the Well of Worlds is unassailable means that it has no permanent defenses, though the PCs face numerous challenges as they fight their way through the site.



The Well of Worlds exists in a planar nonspace that gives the site a nonlinear layout. Areas W2, W3, and W4 are a continuum, with doorways at one side of an area leading to the other side of the area adjacent, as noted by the "A" and "B" keys on the tactical map. A character who looks out of the area W2 doorway on the left side of the map is looking into area W3 from the right. Likewise, a character going through the southwest door in area W3 enters area W4 from the east.

W1. Sovereign Gate

The sole portal within the Well of Worlds is a permanent true portal through which elite githyanki strike teams and scouts have access to any point in the Astral Sea, the world, and the planes beyond. Even though the PCs possess whitefire marks that allow them to enter the Well of Worlds, their presence here does not go unnoticed.

Tactical Encounter: W1. Sovereign Gate (page 69).

W2. Githyanki Bivouac

The githyanki troops that move through the Well of Worlds rest and recuperate here, making use of potent healing magic to quickly get themselves back into the fray. The strike team that recently passed through the portal is here, and its members do not take kindly to the PCs' intrusion.

Tactical Encounter: W2. Githyanki Bivouac (page 71).

W3. Hall of Shards

The planar energy siphoned off through the World Gates is collected and amplified in this arcane nexus. Two eldritch giants work here, manipulating the flow of planar energy as part of the githyanki's plans to extend the power of the Well of Worlds throughout their entire portal network.

Tactical Encounter: W3. Hall of Shards (page 73).

W4. The Stair Gate

This area grants access to the heart of the Well of Worlds, but the PCs' way is blocked by a magically warded gate that requires a skill challenge to open. However, the party's presence here attracts the attention of summoned planar guardians.

Tactical Encounter: W4. The Stair Gate (page 75).

W5. Astral Vortex

A churning astral vortex drives the githyanki's portal network, and is the source of the power that will soon allow that network to touch every part of the world. An eldritch giant ritualist labors here on behalf of the githyanki, but a summoned githyanki guardian shade and the raging vortex itself are the deadlier threats.

Tactical Encounter: W5. Astral Vortex (page 77).

Admiral Kada'ne

The name of Admiral Kada'ne is heard at various points in the adventure, allowing a PC to recall the following information with a DC 27 History check. If none of the characters has any prior knowledge of Kada'ne, they can consult with others in the Coalition (particularly Amyria) to gain the following knowledge.

Admiral Kada'ne was a mid-rank captain of the githyanki astral fleet who threw his lot in with Zetch'r'r when the new emperor claimed power in the aftermath of Vlaakith's fall. The githyanki fleet is strong under Kada'ne's captains, but the admiral is a weak leader. Though a brilliant tactician, he prefers to direct his troops from the deck of a fast ship as far as possible from the real fighting.

Dark Tidings

With the Well of Worlds temporarily secured, the PCs can return to the Fane of Chanhiir by way of the Sovereign Gate in area W1. Whether they determine the operation of the Sovereign Gate first or simply use it as the starting point of a Linked Portal ritual (see the "Sovereign Gate" sidebar), they discover that Bejam has been hard at work in their absence. He, the Nefelus mages, and the Freeriders and other heroes of the coalition have all been bonded with the whitefire mark, allowing them to transit to the Well of Worlds. At the same time, the other Nefelus mages have been working nonstop to keep the Chanhiir gate open as a destination portal for transits from across the world.

Additional members of the Coalition have been joined by more than forty heroes of a dozen lands at the fane, with still more coming by the sound of it. The defenses you set up around the temple have been redoubled. The approaches through the mountains are secure, watchers atop the highest bluffs scan the skies for airships, and the World Portal is quickly cleared of new arrivals and carefully watched for any sign of githyanki activity. So far, however, your presence in the fane appears to have gone unnoticed.

The Mages' Council

After debriefing the PCs, Bejam and a security force cross over to the Well of Worlds. The deva mage is anxious to speak to Haryssus and undertake a full assessment of the site's power. Let the PCs take an extended rest, before or after which they can fine-tune the defenses of the fane as they wish. Whether they remain in the temple or return to the Well of Worlds, Bejam soon calls them to council in Haryssus's library.

The heroes of the Coalition have the Well of Worlds locked down, including an ambush line set up to catch any githyanki passing through the Sovereign Gate. In the bivouac, you spot the Freerider dwarf Ragnum Dourstone, who offers a grim nod by way of greeting. Behind him, more than a dozen dead githyanki are piled high.

Ragnum reports to the PCs that the heroes of the Coalition have been lucky so far in getting the drop on githyanki transiting into the Well of Worlds.

"They're coming through the white portal steady—scouts and strike teams looking to rest up. No sign yet that they know we're here, but we questioned one moving alone, said he was from Utargarth, Utargarath, something like that. Someone named Kada'ne sent him to the fane to see what's up with the team supposed to be holding it. It's a safe bet there'll be more like him coming through soon enough."

A PC that makes a DC 27 History or Arcana check recognizes the name Ragnum heard as "Utargaraith," and knows what it means. (If no PCs make a successful check, they can ask Haryssus or Bejam.)

'Utargaraith' is the name of the interplanar shipyards where the githyanki build and repair their fleets of astral craft and airships—Garaitha's Anvil, as it is most commonly translated. Garaitha was a corsair and military captain whose legendary exploits have inspired generations of githyanki.

The PCs learn more about Garaitha's Anvil in the next section. However, if they question Bejam or Haryssus about the site in this meeting, see "First Strike" on page 53 and the beginning of Part Three (page 54).

The Githyanki's Secret

Beyond the astral vortex, the exhausted Bejam stands with Haryssus, the works of the eldritch giant's library spread across the tables.

"We have gained a valuable ally in our fight against the githyanki," Bejam says, nodding to the giant. "I have learned much of the operation of this place, but I fear that it spells our doom all the same."

Rather than simply having Bejam and Haryssus recite the following information, try to play it out as a give-and-take as the PCs and the mages share and compare what they know.

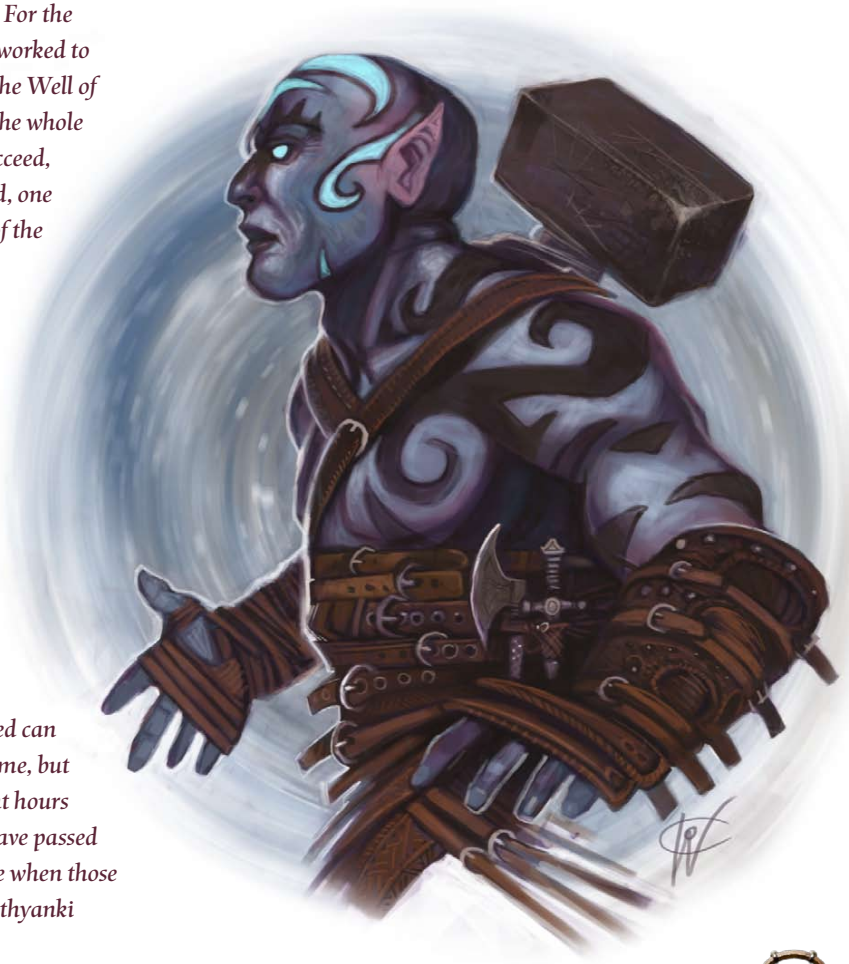
What are the keyholes on the plinth over the stair gate?
"Four crystal keys once granted control of the Well of Worlds to the highest-ranking of the githyanki. Queen Vlaakith held one, but her key was said to be lost when she was destroyed. Zetch'r'r holds one, taken from one of Vlaakith's captains slain when the new emperor came to power. Kada'ne, admiral of the githyanki fleet, holds one. Do'kan, general and master of the githyanki ground forces, holds the third."

What are the githyanki's plans for the Well of Worlds?
"The githyanki have made great advances in portal magic in recent years—some of it stolen; some gifted by allies we can only guess at. Great numbers of eldritch giants have become beholden to the githyanki, and many of those unwilling to serve have been forced to servitude. For the last two years, githyanki and giant mages have worked to carefully reshape the power that flows through the Well of Worlds, hoping to see that power flow through the whole of the githyanki portal network. Should they succeed, the power of the Sovereign Gate will be extended, one node at a time, across all the githyanki portals of the Astral Sea and the planes beyond."

How can the githyanki's plans be stopped?
"The power of the Well of Worlds is crafted and shaped by unique rituals—some older than time, and many now lost. To establish even minimal mastery of the Well would require one of the crystal keys and the rituals of control uniquely bound to those who bear them."

When the PCs have digested the above information, Haryssus ends the discussion on a note of finality.
"My knowledge and your mages' power combined can ward the Well of Worlds against assault for a time, but we cannot hope to control it. Already in the scant hours since you have come here, a score of githyanki have passed through the Sovereign Gate, and more will come when those your friends have slain are missed. When the githyanki realize with certainty that you have taken this place, they will attack with numbers beyond reckoning. You few, brave as you are, cannot stand against them."

From the connection between Kada'ne and the githyanki that invaded the fane, the players should hopefully suggest finding the admiral as a means to locating one of the crystal keys. Even if they don't, however, Bejam announces that it is time to take what they know to the Coalition as a whole.



The Sovereign Gate

It takes 1 hour and three DC 30 Arcana checks to understand the workings of the Sovereign Gate in area W1 of the Well of Worlds. Whether the PCs undertake this effort themselves or leave it to Bejam and the other Coalition mages determines when this information is revealed.

As impossible as it might have seemed, Talanee's description of the Sovereign Gate's function holds true. Its power is built on that of the epic True Portal ritual—magic that creates a teleportation circle capable of carrying creatures to any destination. However, the power of the Sovereign Gate is permanent and even more far-reaching. The pulsing haze of white light that fills this chamber is a weave of planar energy and arcane power that taps into the mind of any creature standing within it. Any place you can name or describe, any location you have ever visited or seen, any site you can remember and summon to mind—the Sovereign Gate will take you there.

The Sovereign Gate has no sigil sequence to mark its planar location. Rather, the flow of planar energy coursing through the Well of Worlds is indelibly marked upon the mind and spirit of each creature that passes through it. Only those who have first been taken through the Sovereign Gate by another creature or who have reached the site through one of the World Gates can transit there. Moreover, the portal holds a permanent record of every location it has ever been used to access—the coordinates of uncountable locations across the planes locked within the pulsing white of its walls.

The Sovereign Gate is a more powerful version of the portal created by the True Portal ritual. It functions only for full-blooded githyanki or creatures bearing the whitefire mark. Using the Sovereign Gate as the source or destination for any portal ritual negates the need for reagents and grants the user a +10 bonus to the Arcana check for the ritual.

Using the Sovereign Gate to transit to a location not marked by a teleportation circle requires a DC 25 Arcana check. A character can make this check only once per hour. The check result determines the portal's duration.

Arcana Check Result	Portal Duration
20-29	1 round
30-39	3 rounds
40 or higher	5 rounds

The Sovereign Gate sets its destination according to the will of a single character who steps within it and makes the Arcana check. If two or more characters attempt to control the portal at the same time, all make opposed Arcana checks. The character with the highest check controls the portal (assuming the check result was 20 or higher), and all creatures within the teleportation circle go to that character's chosen destination.

A nonportal destination can be seen within the Sovereign Gate as a hazy image, just as with a normal portal ritual. However, creatures at the destination cannot see the Sovereign Gate. Creatures stepping through the Sovereign Gate simply appear as if from nowhere at their destination.

War Council

If the details the PCs have learned of the githyanki shipyard and Admiral Kada'ne have not already done so, the title of this adventure should hopefully suggest that an assault on Garaitha's Anvil is the intended endgame. However, the party's previous experience with the fractious Coalition will likely also suggest that establishing a consensus for action will be difficult.

During the PCs' assault on the Well of Worlds, Bejam sent word to the Coalition leadership, requesting that they come to the fane for a war council that can decide the Coalition's course of action. However, not all members of the Coalition leadership have made the journey. In particular, Eoffram Troyas has remained behind in Brindol to help deal with a hobgoblin uprising (a real threat this time, in contrast to the exaggerated attack that played a part in the leadership debate in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King").

Amyria is here, as are other Coalition members known to the PCs (choose the roster based on those characters the PCs have the strongest relationship with, good or bad). However, the cautious Quelenna Entromiel is here as well, potentially undercutting any hope the PCs have of inspiring the coalition into a quick response to the githyanki threat.

If Quelenna was not successful in her bid for leadership of the Coalition in "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King," she is taking advantage of this crisis to clandestinely push her agenda of cautious defense. (See "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King" for more information on Eoffram, Quelenna, and their goals.)

The war council takes place in an abandoned library in the fane. Megan Swiftblade and a dozen other heroes of the Coalition are on guard, but the

bulk of those who have come to defend the fane are outside, in area C4, or in the Well of Worlds, keeping watch against a githyanki attack.

The PCs are present to once again recount their story for those who have not heard it. Bejam likewise summarizes the danger presented by the Well of Worlds and the githyanki's plots.

"The power of the Well of Worlds transcends any magic known to the mortal races. If it can be extended to their wider network of permanent teleportation circles, the githyanki can open portals at will into any location, from any location, and not with vanguard strike teams and scouts but with whole armies. Their assaults will instantly reach behind the strongest walls and beyond the most well-defended roads and passes. The destruction will be absolute. If the githyanki succeed at their plans, no force in the mortal realm will stand against them."

The PCs can add to Bejam's assessment if they wish. However, especially if the characters discuss the need for military action, the Coalition's response leaves them cold. Quelenna Entromiel takes the lead, building on the uncertainty and fear felt by a number of the other Coalition members present.

"We are far from our homes and families—the places and people we are bound to defend. This place, these planar sites you speak of are meaningless targets. A majority of our many lands' heroes are here now to defend these places, and for what? This is a fight we cannot win, and as such, it is a fight we cannot consider. Waiting here for eventual attack or, worse, seeking out the githyanki stretches our already over-extended resources past the breaking point. Instead, we must ask what we might do to hinder the githyanki. Slow down their plots to give us time to plan a proper defense of our homelands."

Let the PCs take the lead in pointing out the futility of defending against an enemy that can move troops from any permanent or temporary teleportation circle to any location in the world in the blink of an eye. However, even martial-minded leaders such as the barbarian elf queen Caliandra are swayed by Quelenna's focus on defending the Coalition's homelands.

Amyria agrees with the PCs, but even if she captured the leadership of the Coalition in the previous adventure, her voice cannot overcome the dissent that Quelenna inspires. Moreover, any attempt on Amyria's part to take the party's side is met with bureaucratic resistance.

"Neither you nor these adventurers have the authority to direct the Coalition as a whole according to your whim. I move that this war council be dissolved at once, and that we return to Sayre for a full debate."

To the PCs, it should be clear that this war council is destined to fail.

Fortune Favors the Bold

This section of the adventure features no combat, no traps, and no skill challenges. However, it is nonetheless intended to represent a turning point for the campaign. This is strictly a roleplaying scenario, and it gives the PCs a chance to step up as de facto leaders of the Coalition—a role they have slowly established for themselves at every previous stage of the paragon tier.

It is up to the PCs to lead the heroes of the Coalition in a preemptive assault against Garaitha's Anvil—an attack designed both to cripple the githyanki war machine, and to deliver to the Coalition the power to control the Well of Worlds. To do so, the players need to undertake a number of steps, as indicated below.

Most of these points follow naturally from the information previously revealed. For example, because the PCs know that Kada'ne is at Garaitha's Anvil, it makes sense that they would seek to scry the admiral's location. However, these broad points are not meant to be absolutes. Let the players' decisions set out the groundwork and the plan for the assault, using NPCs to establish direction only if the PCs seem stuck or request their aid.

If the players come up with alternative approaches to some of the points below, adjust and improvise as necessary—even to the point of forgoing a stealth mission in favor of a straight-up strike (see the "Direct Assault" sidebar in the next section).

A Time for Heroes

The PCs must win the favor of the other heroes of the Coalition if the attack on Garaitha's Anvil has any hope of succeeding. However, this initial task is perhaps the easiest part of their plan. At the first sign that the PCs intend to act against the orders of the Coalition, Megan Swiftblade and the other Freeriders immediately back them up in the war council. (Assuming you have played through "Beyond the Mottled Tower," Megan owes the PCs a life-debt that has earned her allegiance even if the relationship between the two groups has remained strained.)

"The Coalition's so-called leaders don't know what they're saying. Bankers and merchant lords, the lot of them. If you say we need to strike this Garaitha's Anvil, the Freeriders are with you. But there's nearly a hundred of us here all told, come together to show our strength. With you leading, I promise the rest will follow."

If the scene suggests it, one of the Freeriders might tear a token of office from one of the reluctant Coalition leaders, handing it to the PCs in an overtly symbolic gesture. This is the party's moment, and it should feel memorable. Outside the fane, the PCs can then take their case to the Hundred—the assembled heroes of the Coalition, ready to give their lives to defend their world.

In a worst-case scenario in which the PCs decide to acquiesce to the whims of the Coalition, Amyria can take a more direct role in suggesting that bold action is necessary to turn the tide of war. However, she has not the reputation or the experience to lead the Hundred. Only the PCs can do this.

First Strike

Announcing the intent to attack Garaitha's Anvil in force is one thing. Figuring out how to get the heroes of the Coalition to the shipyard without alerting the githyanki to the impending assault is something else.

Characters trained in Arcana or History can study the lore of the Well of Worlds (that found with the eldritch giants in Encounter W3 and in Haryssus's library) to find out everything they need to know about Garaitha's Anvil. Paraphrase the information given at the beginning of "Part Three: Garaitha's Anvil" on page 54.

The Garaitha docks are set with two score permanent portals whose sigil sequences are one of the most closely guarded secrets of the githyanki empire. However, the unique nature of the Sovereign Gate allows the sigil sequences of the Garaitha portals to be extracted carefully. If the PCs want to undertake this task themselves, make it a series of DC 27 Arcana checks or an impromptu skill challenge. Alternatively, the eldritch giant Haryssus can obtain the sequences (or, if necessary, suggest this course of action).

The Nefelus mages can set up teleportation circles to take the PCs and the Hundred from the fane to Garaitha's Anvil. Once the attackers have transited to the shipyard, the mages then attempt to block access to the shipyard's portals using the power of the Well of Worlds. This should prevent a githyanki counterattack, at least for a short time.

Kada'ne's Key

The PCs know that Kada'ne is at Garaitha's Anvil, and that control of the Well of Worlds might be possible with the crystal key the githyanki admiral is said to hold. The githyanki have no fear of these keys falling into the wrong hands, knowing that they can be used only by full-blooded githyanki who themselves have been attuned to the keys with unique rituals. Bejam and Haryssus believe that they can overcome these protections, but finding and capturing Kada'ne can be a challenge even for the most capable heroes.

With their skills and experience, the PCs are the most logical choice to undertake the strike-team assault to locate *Cev'ren* and Kada'ne. Although the assault on Garaitha's Anvil is not merely a diversion, it allows the PCs to focus on the specific goal of finding the admiral while the other heroes of the Coalition keep the githyanki on the ropes.

Target Acquired

Garaitha's Anvil is a vast place, and the PCs have little hope of finding Kada'ne by mere chance. However, the unique nature of the Well of Worlds means that a character can use scrying rituals to search for the admiral or his flagship even in the astral nonspace in which the shipyard exists. The entire shipyard is under the effect of a Forbiddance ritual for the purpose of scrying effects, but the Well of Worlds can overcome that.

Whether alone or with Bejam's aid, the PCs can obtain the location of the specific repair dock where *Cev'ren* is moored. More importantly, they can work out the closest portal to arrive at and can see enough of the area around the portal to note the exterior dock entrance, its defenses, and the under-construction extension that offers the easiest way into the area. Paraphrase the information given under "Garaitha's Anvil Encounters" in the next section as the PCs plan their assault.

The Moment of Truth

With the Hundred soundly behind them, the PCs have set in motion a plan that might conceivably turn the tide of war. When they are ready to lead the assault, go to the next section.

Part Three: Garaitha's Anvil

The shipyard of Garaitha's Anvil is a planar mote suspended at the boundary between the world, the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and the Astral Sea. From its surface, the shipyard appears to be the interior of a vast sphere, its ground curving up to all sides. At its center, directly above any viewer standing on its surface, a great astral gate acts as a transit point for the ships that are built and repaired here. Forty permanent teleportation circles across the shipyard connect Garaitha's Anvil to the Astral Sea, as well as to the world, the Feywild, and the Shadowfell, all of which provide the raw materials and labor that fuel the construction of the githyanki war fleet.

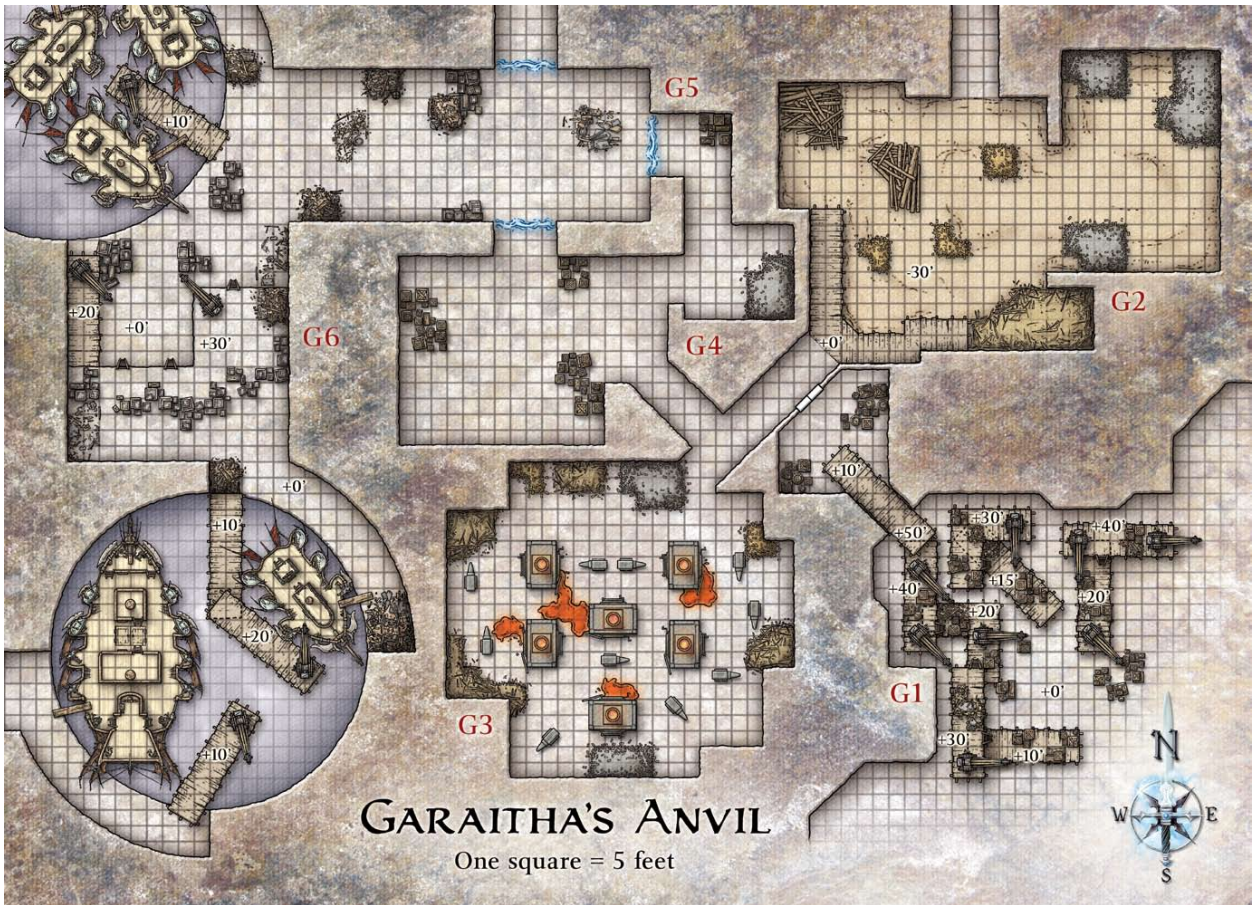
Garaitha's Anvil Encounters

The attack against the shipyard catches the githyanki entirely by surprise. However, though the heroes of the Hundred have followed the party's lead to take the war to the githyanki, a victory here will be for naught if the PCs cannot capture Admiral Kada'ne and the key to the Well of Worlds.

The Garaitha's Anvil encounters represent only a small part of this repair dock complex, which itself is one of dozens of similar dock facilities spread across the surface of the planar mote. Any exits from the repair dock lead to similar chambers in adjoining docks—the warehouses, forges, mills, and arcane laboratories dedicated to supporting the githyanki war machine. The docks where airships and astral ships (including *Cev'ren*) are moored are sealed off under moveable domes.

A vast astral gate sits at the center of the inverse sphere of the shipyard. Ships can rise to and descend from the gate under their own power (the githyanki's astral craft normally function only in the Astral Sea), but the unstable flow of energy within the gate makes it difficult to properly navigate astral craft above the surface of Garaitha's Anvil. This is an advantage to the heroes assaulting the shipyard (since it prevents the numerous ships present from taking part in the githyanki's defense of the site), but raises the stakes for the PCs in the ship-to-ship battle in encounter G7.

Garaitha's Anvil is populated with workers from the githyanki's servant-races, particularly fomorians and other giants. As low-rank laborers, these creatures do not bear the whitefire mark. All creatures within the shipyard converse in Deep Speech.



G1: Construction Site

Breaking from the main battle, the PCs fight their way through a force of githyanki defenders to gain access to the repair dock complex where Admiral Kada'ne's flagship *Cev'ren* is moored.

An open storage space leads to a locked door and the repair dock beyond. The door can be opened with a DC 27 Thievery check or smashed in with a DC 20 Strength check. If the door is broken open, the creatures in areas G2 and G3 do not hear it.

Tactical Encounter: G1. Dock Siege (page 79).

G2: Loading Zone

Within the repair dock complex, a planar loading zone has become an embarkation point for giant reinforcements summoned to the battle.

Tactical Encounter: G2. Loading Zone (page 81).

G3: Fire and Forge

A cadre of fire giants operates a smithy that turns out steel- and brass-work for the githyanki's astral craft and airships. With the alarm sounded, the PCs find these servants of the githyanki forging deadly weapons to be taken to the battle in the shipyard outside.

Tactical Encounter: G3. Fire and Forge (page 83).

G4: Warehouse

This dark space is a testament to the advanced state of the githyanki invasion. Its crates contain weapons, armor, field rations, and other supplies for a long military campaign. Just as disconcerting are signs that many more crates have recently been moved out from this area as the githyanki invasion is stepped up across the world.

G5: Dock Gate

At the center of the repair dock complex, access to the ships is guarded by a force of githyanki and fomorians. The docks are sealed off from the laborers' areas and warehouses by magical wards that the PCs must first shut down, then reactivate to prevent new defenders from joining the fight against them.

Tactical Encounter: G5. Dock Gate (page 85).

G6: Boarding Party

Kada'ne's flagship can be seen in the distance, but another force of githyanki guards stands between the PCs and their target. When the cowardly Kada'ne takes to the air, the characters must commandeer the githyanki astral strike ship Iliyoru, taking to the air after the fleeing *Cev'ren*.

Tactical Encounter: G6. Boarding Party (page 88).

G7: Iliyoru's Flight

A ship-to-ship battle ensues as the PCs attempt to catch up to the fleeing Kada'ne, using the power of the strike ship to attack *Cev'ren* even as they ward off an aerial assault by githyanki warriors on flying mounts.

Tactical Encounter: G7. Iliyoru's Flight (page 91).

G8: Kada'ne's Stand

In the end, both ships lock together and spin out of control toward the vast astral gate above. On the decks of *Cev'ren* and Iliyoru, the PCs face off against Kada'ne's troops and the admiral himself—a quarter-mile above the bloody battle below.

Tactical Encounter: G8. Kada'ne's Stand (page 95).

Striking the Anvil

As the PCs prepare to lead the Hundred into battle, Bejam and his mages set up the teleportation circles that will take them to Garaitha's Anvil.

Across the bluffs and trails surrounding the fane, the mages of the Coalition are scribing dozens of planar portals, causing the fading twilight to blaze with eldritch light. Spread out before them, the greatest heroes of the mortal realm stand in expectation of the battle to come. Most are on foot, a score or more mounted on steeds still skittish from having made the transit through portals from their own lands. One force of rangers from the desert lands south of Elsir Vale make a last check of the tack on a flight of griffons. No one speaks.

Direct Assault

If the PCs are dead-set against taking the easy way in to the repair dock complex, simply create a main entrance that passes through mostly empty warehouse space similar to area G4, then connects to area G5 by way of the door at the top of the overview map. The repair dock complex features no windows or other entrances aboveground, so the main entrance or the under-construction extension are the only ways in. However, a frontal assault is by far the tougher of the two approaches.

The ground-level main doors of each repair dock complex are guarded by two fomorian warriors and two fomorian painbringers (a level 21 encounter; see Encounter C3 and the *Monster Manual*® for statistics blocks). The fomorians quickly fall back from the ongoing battle when they see any PC approach the doors. Additionally, starting in the fourth round of the fight, six githyanki minions join the fray each round—either blademasters (Encounter C1), gish crusaders (G1), or psychic archers (G5). See those encounters for statistics blocks.

The doors into all the repair dock complexes are warded by the same magic that protects the doorways into area G5. See encounter G5 for details of the skill challenge necessary to disable the doors' magical wards. Once those wards are disabled, an exterior door into the repair dock complex requires a DC 27 Strength check to open or close. Any fomorians and githyanki that survive the fight pursue the PCs into the repair dock.

PCs who make their way through the main doors go straight to Encounter G5. However, the sound of combat at the main entrance puts the creatures in that area on alert. Additionally, all eight of the fomorian guards from Encounter G2 and four fire giant serfs from Encounter G3 come to G5 to enter the fray, arriving at a rate of two giants per round.

At your signal, Bejam and his mages activate the planar portals, and a flare of white light cuts through the darkness. Within that light, hazy images of the shipyard flare to life—windowless stone buildings, the open spaces between them thronging with githyanki and giants.

Around you, the Hundred are ready, waiting to move at your word.

The attack on Garaitha's Anvil is a broad assault through a dozen portals simultaneously, and the heroes of the Hundred hit the githyanki hard. Alongside the assault, the PCs undertake one last strike team mission—breaking for the repair facility where Kada'ne and his flagship wait.

When the PCs step into the portal prepared for them, the Hundred follow.

The portals through which you emerge in Garaitha's Anvil go dark almost as soon as you step through them. Bejam and Haryssus made good on their pledge to seal planar access into the shipyard. However, high above, a blazing circle of white light hangs—the massive astral gate around which the shipyard has been built. Even as you watch, a half-dozen astral strike ships rise toward the gate, caught up in its flow of energy then swallowed with an immense flash as they are shunted away.

To the right and high above you along the curve of the shipyard floor, the banner of the Freeriders waves at the front of an assault against an emplacement of githyanki guards scrambling to get into defensive positions. To your left, a force of dwarf warriors chant a death dirge for the fallen Kalad as they cut their way through a squad of giants—howling fomorian guards and laborers towering above their githyanki masters.

Behind you, cavalry forces that have come through their portals on horseback crash over githyanki ground troops like a living wave. Overhead, ranger archers on griffons wing their way above the battlefield, a force of githyanki flying forth to meet them on reptilian fliers, shrieking as they strike.

Screaming oaths of vengeance, the hundred greatest heroes of the mortal world throw themselves against waves of defenders that must total ten times that number. The battle for Garaitha's Anvil has begun.

Turning the Tide

If the party had a relatively easy time with the previous encounters, feel free to add a denouement combat challenge taking out the last pockets of githyanki resistance. Otherwise, as the PCs descend in Iliyoru, they can see that the heroes of the Hundred have won the day on the ground below.

The forces of Garaitha's Anvil have been routed—the heroes of the world victorious. The bodies of githyanki and giants are spread across the shipyard by the hundreds, as are the throngs of prisoners being held under tight watch by the Freeriders and others. The damaged Iliyoru lands noisily in an open space close to the dock where it was originally moored, all eyes on you as you disembark. And as one, the heroes of the Hundred salute, five-score weapons raised to the white sky as a shout of triumph echoes from the gray stones.

The casualties on the Coalition's side are thankfully few. While the PCs bask in the well-deserved glow of victory, the surviving githyanki can be held within the docks while arrangements are made for them to be moved. Having scried the battle, Bejam and Amyria arrive by portal to debrief the PCs and take possession of Kada'ne's crystal key and the admiral himself (assuming he or his corpse survived the final fight). Bejam then returns to the Well of Worlds, where he and Haryssus are successful in bringing the site under Coalition control.

Spoils of War

Any warriors captured in the battle for Garaitha's Anvil are mid-level leaders at best, who know nothing more about the githyanki's plots than the PCs have already learned. In particular, the rank-and-file githyanki know nothing of Tiamat's involvement with Zetch'r'r's plots. However, Kada'ne is one of the githyanki's highest-ranking leaders, and he could prove instrumental to the PCs' goals in the next installment of the adventure path.

In addition to crippling the githyanki's ability to wage war through their portal network, the capture of the Well of Worlds grants the Coalition additional resources. In Haryssus's lore, one of the PCs discovers a ritual that can undo the effect of the githyanki possession seen in previous adventures. Any captured githyanki spies can be freed of this foul possession, restoring their minds and driving the possessing spirits out.

The Future

The Coalition's rout of Garaitha's Anvil deals a major blow to the githyanki war effort, effectively scuttling a significant portion of their astral fleet and putting large numbers of astral craft and airships under Coalition control. While the fear of a githyanki reprisal might loom large, the PCs' victory allows Bejam and Haryssus to establish full control over the Well of Worlds for the Coalition.

The same wards that once prevented access to the planar mote by any but the githyanki can now be reworked to prevent the githyanki from making use of the Sovereign Gate. More importantly, by shutting down the flow of power from the World Gates, the Coalition can cripple the githyanki portal network, making a counterattack against Garaitha's Anvil impossible and significantly limiting the githyanki's ability to wage war against the world.

A decisive blow has been dealt against the githyanki. The tide of war has turned, though the PCs' fight is far from over.

The True Plan

Although Tiamat makes use of the githyanki, her plot to kill Bahamut does not rely on Emperor Zethch'r's githyanki. As mentioned earlier, the githyanki invasion of the world is merely a ploy to weaken the forces of good and distract Bahamut and his faithful while she pursues a plan to summon the Platinum Dragon in mortal form. She intends to destroy him at that point, thus ending a conflict that has recurred since Io was split. If the PCs continue to follow the path they are on, they will have an opportunity in the near future to learn this information.

C1: Githyanki Watch

Encounter Level 17 (8,800 XP)

Setup

8 githyanki blademasters (B)
2 githyanki reavers (R)

The path the PCs follow leads to one of two cavern entrances to the temple. The invading githyanki expect no trouble here, and they are distracted.

The PCs can follow the path directly to the cavern easily enough. However, unless they do so invisibly, the githyanki have a group passive Perception check (+10) to spot them when they are 50 feet from the cavern entrance (the edge of the trail on the map). Even distracted, the guards automatically see any PCs who approach closer than 25 feet from the cavern.

Characters can leave the path and attempt to climb the rough walls above the entrance (DC 20 Athletics), but making noise on the shadowy slopes is a bigger concern than staying hidden. With a DC 20 Stealth check, a PC stays hidden but dislodges a fall of rubble and scree that puts the githyanki below on alert. A DC 25 Stealth check allows a character to approach unheard and unseen.

If the githyanki are alerted by the party's approach, they pull back to the inner cavern where they can be seen only with a DC 20 Perception check. Adjust their positions on the tactical map accordingly.

Characters approaching by air from above can automatically stay hidden until they attack. They gain surprise unless the githyanki are otherwise alerted to their presence.

When the PCs can see the cavern entrance, read:

The twisting path leads to a cliff, atop which a broad shelf of stone is lit by the pulsing white light of magic lamps. The cavern beyond falls quickly into shadow, but it appears to narrow down to a passageway leading farther into the mountain.

Perception Check

DC 20: *Even the shadows can't hide the patches of the cavern floor that have enormous X's scrawled in charcoal upon them.*

If the githyanki are not alerted to the PCs' presence, read:

Nearly a dozen githyanki stand or crouch along the stone shelf and within the shelter of the cavern. Their armor and livery mark them as guards watching over this entrance, though they appear profoundly disinterested in the task.

In addition to the guards, an astral wave trap wards this approach to the fane. This defense was set up by the githyanki of the temple, and although the invaders are aware of its existence, they cannot disable it. The X's marked on the floor indicate the trigger points the guards are aware of, but there are others as shown on the tactical map.

8 Githyanki (B) Blademasters — **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 400 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 8 psychic damage.

Twin Longsword Strike (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 12 psychic damage

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki blademaster flies 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 12 (+9)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, 2 silver longswords

2 Githyanki Reavers (R) — **Level 17 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 1,600 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 197; **Bloodied** 98
AC 29; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

Silver Fullblade (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d12 + 4 (crit 2d12 + 28) plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Reaving Strike (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Reliable, Weapon**
+18 vs. Fortitude; 3d12 + 4 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki reaver or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, silver fullblade

Astral Vents	**Level 19 Blaster**
Trap	XP 2,400

The floor of the cavern suddenly ripples as a wave of unearthly power lifts you off your feet.

Trap: When a creature steps onto a trigger point, a pulse of astral energy disrupts the space around it, blasting it skyward.

Perception

PCs who intuit that the X's on the cavern floor mark the trigger points of the trap can choose to avoid those locations. However, characters cannot use Perception to detect the unmarked trigger points of this trap.

Trigger

When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trigger square, the trap attacks that creature.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +22 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage, and the target is lifted 10 feet into the air. Unless the target has the means to stay aloft, it then falls to the ground in a random adjacent square, taking 1d10 damage and being knocked prone as normal for falling.

Countermeasures

- A creature can jump the squares to avoid triggering them.
- A creature that triggers the trap can attempt a DC 27 Acrobatics check. With a successful check, the creature takes no damage but is pushed 1 square in a random direction.
- A creature blown into the air by a trap can, as normal, make an Acrobatics check to reduce falling damage.
- A creature adjacent to a trigger square can disable that square for the rest of the encounter with a DC 27 Arcana check.

Tactics

The githyanki reavers fight close together, each targeting a lightly armored foe as it flanks with a blademaster. A reaver switches targets freely in an attempt to sow maximum disruption in melee, reserving its *reaving strike* for a defender or striker that deals it damage. If either reaver immobilizes a foe, both focus their next *silver fullblade* attacks on that creature.

Two blademasters flank with the reavers, while the others swarm heavily armored PCs in groups of two or three, flanking for combat advantage and making *twin longsword strikes*.

The githyanki avoid the marked triggers of the astral vents, but they can be affected by the unmarked triggers.

These githyanki are confident in their ability to take care of any threat, and they hurl insults at the PCs throughout the fight. They raise no alarm and fight to the death.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The narrow canyon walls cut any daylight to dim light along the path. At night, the path is dark. Magic lamps shed bright light within the mouth of the cavern and across the stone shelf day and night, fading to dim light in the cavern.

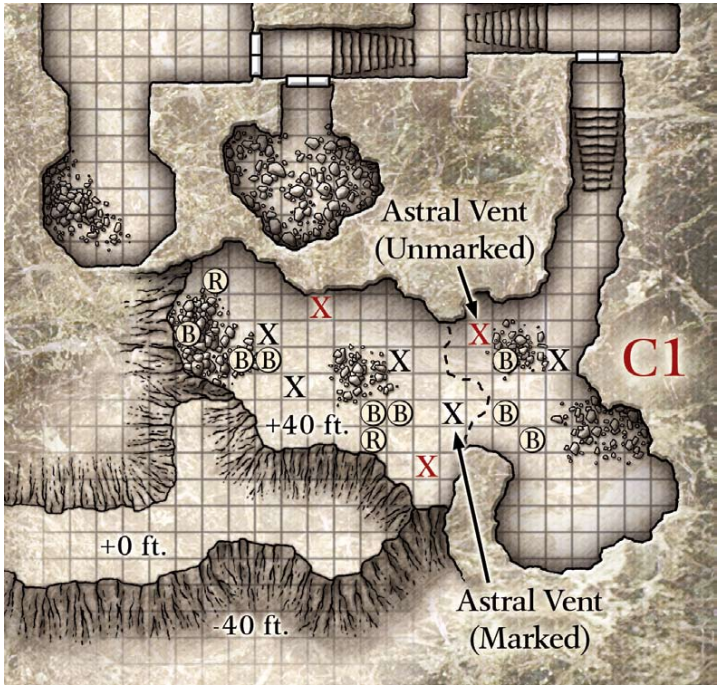
Ceiling: The ceiling of the cavern is 20 feet high.

Astral Vent: The githyanki have marked five of the trigger points to the astral vent trap in charcoal on the rock shelf. The three trigger points shown in red on the tactical map are not visible to the PCs or the githyanki.

Cliff: The steep slope below the shelf and to both sides of the path drops off 40 feet. Scaling a cliff requires a DC 20 Athletics check. A creature that drops down from above takes 4d10 falling damage.

Stairs: The rough stone stairs are difficult terrain.

Rubble: These areas of loose scree are difficult terrain. A creature that runs, charges, or makes a double move through rubble must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.



C2: The Watch of the Dead

Encounter Level 18 (11,000 XP)

Setup

Githyanki mindlasher
3 githyanki shades (S)
3 githyanki warmongers

The resting place of the honored dead of Chanhiir was the sight of a last stand by the temple's faithful. When the invaders pulled down this place in the aftermath, they drew forth the vengeful spirits of the githyanki warriors interred here. The invading githyanki now shun this area, not even having claimed their dead. They avoid attack by running through here when they go to and from area C1.

Perception Check (within 30 feet of the doorway)

DC 13: *No sound comes from the darkness ahead, but the foul stench of death rises on the air.*

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

Huge statues of githyanki warriors once lined the walls of this chamber, but these now lie shattered and strewn across the floor. The rotting corpses of a half-dozen githyanki lie alongside them, all well-armored warriors. At the center of the room, the floor opens up to create a balcony set with a stone railing. Light and raised voices come up from below.

Perception Check

DC 13: *The voices converse in Deep Speech and in the dialect of the githyanki. However, the words cannot be made out from this distance.*

DC 20: *The shattered statues and their rubble flare and pulse with a faint glow.*

As long as they do not have a light source in hand, the PCs can cross to the balcony railing without attracting the attention of the githyanki below.

\The chamber below appears to be a temporary camp with three dozen bedrolls set around a pair of smoldering fire pits. Three githyanki are here—warriors by their look, and all of them angry. One mutters that the human outpost waits to be taken, cursing the orders that keep the githyanki in the temple while "the astraan mages chant their useless rituals over the shielded circle." A second growls agreement as he curses someone he calls "the coward Kada'ne, safe on Cev'ren while we hide like dogs for the sake of his fear."

A character can make a DC 27 History check to recall the name of the githyanki Admiral Kada'ne (see the sidebar on page 49). If the PCs are not successful now, they have the opportunity to learn who Kada'ne is later in the adventure.

In the round or two that it takes a PC to listen at the railing (or if the party attempts to bypass the balcony on their way to the stairs), the spectral githyanki shades guarding this place rise from the rubble.

From the rubble, three shapes rise across the chamber—their forms that of armored githyanki warriors, but strangely translucent in the gloom. Without word or warning, they attack.

Any sound of fighting reaches the githyanki below (the mindlasher and warmongers), who assume that their allies at area C1 have come under attack while returning from duty. They come up the stairs and enter combat in the third round.

Tactics

The githyanki shades take on lightly armored foes with their *ghost swords*, making spirit rake attacks against heavily armored combatants or those staying at the edge of the fray. Once they slow an enemy with *bladed wrath*, they use *soul strike* to devastate it, and follow that with *spirit rake*.

The warmongers target strikers and defenders with *telekinetic crush* and *silver greatsword* attacks. A warmonger reserves *soulsword burst* until two or more PCs are adjacent to it, but it catches the githyanki shades in the burst if it can.

The githyanki mindlasher stays at the edge of the fray, targeting well-armored PCs with *psychic slam* and *mind crush* attacks. It maintains cover behind the fallen statues, entering melee only if pressed.

The githyanki shades focus their attacks on the PCs as the creatures that drew them into combat. However, a shade that finds a githyanki between it and a PC target attacks the closer target fifty percent of the time.

If the PCs move down to the lower chamber, the githyanki follow but the shades do not.

3 Githyanki Shades (S)	Level 16 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	XP 1,400 each

Initiative +19; **Senses** Perception +16; darkvision
HP 84; **Bloodied** 42
AC 30; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Speed 8, fly 8

Ghost Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+21 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage.

Spirit Rake (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**
Ranged 5; +19 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Bladed Wrath (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Burst 1; +21 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to all defenses and is slowed (save ends both).

Soul Strike (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
Slowed targets only; +19 vs. Will; 4d10 + 5 radiant damage, and the target gains vulnerable 10 psychic until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** – (understands Common, Deep Speech)
Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 16 (+11)
Con 18 (+12) **Int** 19 (+12) **Cha** 21 (+13)

Githyanki Mindlasher	Level 18 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,000

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +20
HP 132; **Bloodied** 66
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 8; see also *telekinetic leap*

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+25 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindlasher or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Mind Crush (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 2 within 20; +23 vs. Will; 1d10 damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends). Aftereffect: The target gains vulnerable 10 psychic and can make only basic attacks (save ends).

Psychic Slam (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 2 within 10; +23 vs. Will; 2d8 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +11, Insight +12
Str 22 (+15) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 22 (+15)
Con 18 (+13) **Int** 20 (+14) **Cha** 14 (+11)
Equipment silver longsword

3 Githyanki Warmongers	Level 17 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,600 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 162; **Bloodied** 81
AC 33; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

Silver Greatsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+24 vs. AC; 2d10 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, plus 3d8 extra psychic damage if the target is immobilized or stunned.

Telekinetic Crush (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Soulsword Burst (standard; requires silver greatsword; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Close burst 1; +22 vs. Will; 3d10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and is stunned (save ends both).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+11)
Con 18 (+12) **Int** 16 (+11) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light in the lower camp; dim light in the upper statue chamber.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Balcony: The statue chamber opens up at its center 30 feet above the floor below. A stone railing around the balcony is 4 feet high. Characters who fall from the balcony take 3d10 damage.

Statues and Rubble: The shattered remains of the oversized githyanki statues provide cover. The statues and their rubble are difficult terrain. It takes a DC 13 Athletics or Acrobatics check to move over a statue.

Psychic energy flares unchecked within the fallen statues and their rubble. A creature that ends its turn on or adjacent to a statue or in a square of rubble takes 2d10 psychic damage and grants combat advantage to all adjacent creatures until the beginning of its next turn. The githyanki shades are immune to this effect.

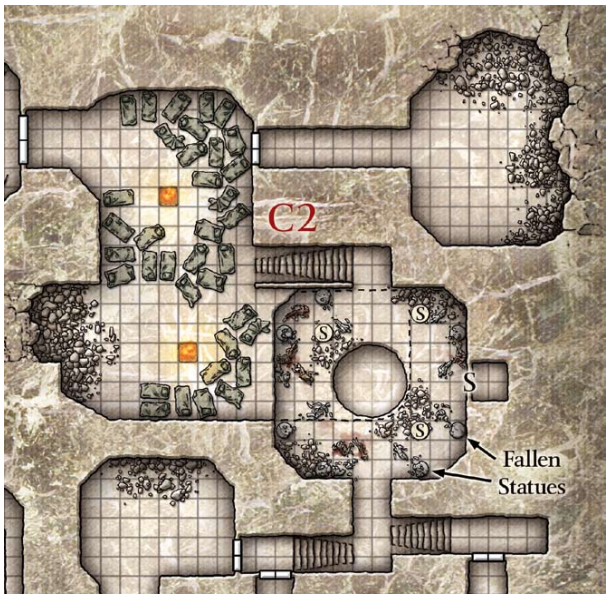
Stairs: The steep stairs descending to the level below are difficult terrain.

Bodies: The bodies of dead githyanki strewn throughout the statue chamber are difficult terrain.

Bedrolls: Bedrolls spread throughout the camp in the lower chamber are difficult terrain.

Fire Pits: These are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters a fire pit takes 1d8 + 5 fire damage.

Secret Door: This hidden door requires a DC 20 Perception check to spot and a DC 25 Thievery or Strength check to open.



C3: Prisoners of Chanhiir

Encounter Level 17 (9,600 XP)

Setup

2 fomorian painbringers (P)
10 githyanki prisoners (G)

What was once a training ground for the hundred githyanki who made Chanhiir their home is now a holding area for the survivors of the assault. The githyanki's fomorian servants stand guard.

As the PCs approach this area, read:

The stench of filth becomes stronger as you move along the corridor. The dull and intermittent pounding of steel on stone rises ahead, along with a harsh voice shouting. "You like that, small ones? You keep your silence, you all meet the same fate!"

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

A ruined martial training hall is lined with shattered weapon racks and filled with what appear to be pillars of yellow-white light extending floor to ceiling. These shift slowly, drifting across the chamber as they flare and fade. In the haze of light, ten githyanki in tattered robes are roped together hand and foot and huddled along one wall. Two hulking fomorians pace before them, one clubbing the sodden remains of a githyanki corpse with its flail.

Perception Check

DC 20: *Both fomorians wear glowing sigils on their wrists—a sword wrapped in an outline of white flame.*

Insight Check

DC 20: *The fomorians keep an uneasy eye on the shifting yellow pillars as they threaten the githyanki, but the prisoners show no fear.*

The fomorians have been charged with convincing the githyanki to reveal the secret of disabling the wards on the World Gate (see the next section). The giants are distracted, and the PCs have a chance to attack with surprise.

2 Fomorian (P) Painbringers — **Level 19 Elite Controller**
Huge fey humanoid (giant) — XP 4,800 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +16; truesight 6
HP 362; **Bloodied** 181
AC 35; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 33
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8
Action Points 1

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 3; +24 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage; see also *studied foe*.

Evil Eye (minor; at-will)
Ranged 5; +22 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 5 damage whenever it damages the fomorian painbringer. If the painbringer uses this power against a new target, the previous target is no longer affected.

Funnel Pain (standard; at-will)
Ranged 8; +22 vs. Will; 4d6 + 5 damage; see also *studied foe*.

Painful Visions (minor; encounter)
Close burst 4; +22 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends); see also *studied foe*.

Studied Foe
The fomorian painbringer gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against a creature affected by its *evil eye* power.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Elven, Deep Speech
Skills Intimidate +19

Str 24 (+16)	**Dex** 9 (+8)	**Wis** 14 (+11)
Con 21 (+14)	**Int** 12 (+10)	**Cha** 21 (+14)

Equipment chainmail, flail

Tactics

The prisoners flatten against the nearest wall, avoiding the PCs, the fomorians, and the pillars of light. They attempt to free themselves as they warily watch the fray. If the PCs engage the githyanki, see the sidebar on page 65.

The fomorian painbringers avoid being flanked, keeping the pillars of light between them and the PCs. A painbringer uses its *evil eye* against creatures that attack it, making *funnel pain* attacks against heavily armored PCs and using *painful visions* if hemmed in by two or more foes.

Development

The burning sigils on the fomorians are a thing the PCs have never seen before. See "The Whitefire Mark" (page 45) for more information.

When the fight here is done, speaking with the prisoners and securing the doors out of this area are likely to be the PCs' first priorities. See "The Waiting Game," below, and "The Chanhiiri" also below.

The Waiting Game

The stone doors leading out of this area open easily, as do the identical doors at the end of the connecting passageway. A wide gap where the second doors close allows the PCs to see into area C4 without having to open them. (The creatures there are not as shown on the Encounter C4 tactical map. Likewise, the bodies on the map are not present yet. See the next encounter for more information.)

The chamber beyond the doors has the look of an auditorium or shrine, with wide terraces that might be some sort of amphitheater seating stepping down from the walls. Scattered across the terraces, a number of wide altars blaze with a searing white flame. At the center of the floor, a raised dais holds a permanent teleportation circle. However, this is sealed in behind a sphere of shimmering magical force that sends tendrils of white light pulsing into the room. The sphere of light is the focus of the githyanki that fill this area, who are milling around the dais and arguing among themselves.

Perception Check

DC 13: *The githyanki are spaced out warily around the pulsing sphere, as if they fear getting too close.*

DC 20: *The githyanki are arguing over their inability to overcome the ward protecting the teleportation circle. One talks of giving the fomorians time to work a harsher interrogation, but other githyanki fear Kada'ne's wrath if the high priests aren't returned to the anvil in good time.*

The PCs learn the meaning of "the anvil" later in the adventure.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The pillars of light shed bright light throughout the area.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

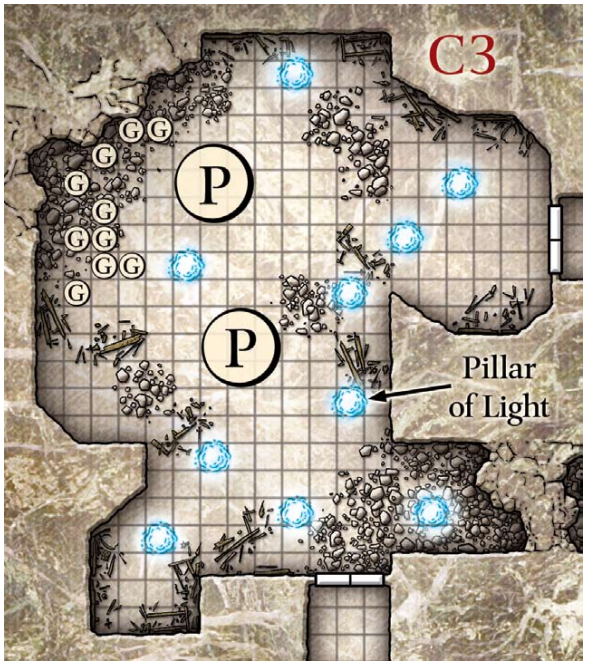
Pillars of Light: Astral energy has been summoned and bound to this place by githyanki priests, creating a challenging combat ground. After the turn of the last creature in the initiative order, each pillar of light shifts 1d4 squares in a random direction.

A creature that begins its turn adjacent to a pillar of light takes 1d10 radiant damage and slides 2 squares in a random direction away from the pillar. A creature that moves through or begins its turn in the space occupied by a pillar of light takes 2d10 radiant damage, slides 4 squares in a random direction away from the pillar, and is knocked prone. If a pillar slides a creature into the area of another pillar, the original slide ends and the creature suffers the effect of the new pillar.

Rubble: These areas of loose scree are difficult terrain.

Shattered Weapon Racks: The githyanki invaders destroyed the temple's armaments, making these areas difficult terrain. Additionally, a character knocked prone in the area of a shattered weapon rack must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or take 1d8 damage from shards, spikes, and shattered blades.

Doors: These stone double doors are closed, preventing the sound of combat in this area from reaching area C4.



The Chanhiiri

Assuming the PCs did not engage them, the githyanki prisoners have freed themselves from their bonds by the time combat ends. However, if they are approached and spoken to in Common or Deep Speech, only their leader Talanee responds.

The githyanki prisoners show signs of having been repeatedly beaten. An elderly female steps forward with a pronounced limp. "I am Talanee," she says. "You have our thanks for your aid, but you must leave this place. The injury done to our temple must be addressed, but this battle is not yours."

The PCs are likely to be suspicious of Talanee and her followers, but the githyanki are equally wary. However, they answer a few basic questions in gratitude for having been freed.

Who are you?
"We are the Chanhiiri, the faithful of the Fane of Chanhiir."

Who are the other githyanki?
"They are the forces of Zetch'r'r the False. They have claimed this fane and bestowed on the Chanhiiri the sentence of death."

How do you plan to defeat the invaders?
"The destiny of our people is struggle, and we will die free as we lived if that is our fate."

The insular Chanhiiri do not give up more information easily. Each item below requires a DC 25 Diplomacy check. Each PC can make only one check, and the PCs cannot aid each other. With each successful check, read the most appropriate piece of information for the PC's line of questioning. Any further questioning must wait until "Secrets of the Fane," page 44. (Even with a successful check, there are things Talanee does not speak of—specifically, the Chanhiiri's loyalty to Vlaakith and the connection between the fane and the Well of Worlds.)

What happened here? Why are you fighting the other githyanki?
"The usurper Zetch'r'r reshapes the will and destiny of the githyanki in the name of his own ambition. We reject that ambition, for which our people name us traitors."

What is the Fane of Chanhiir?
"This temple is an ancient site—old as the githyanki empire. Chanhiir, a legendary githyanki mage, was its first high priest and founder. His faithful numbered nearly a hundred before Zetch'r'r's force despoiled this place."

Why were you left alive?
"We will be returned to Tu'narath, where our execution will act as a warning to all those who oppose Zetch'r'r's rule."

Why are the invaders still here? Why were the fomorians threatening you?
"There is power here that Zetch'r'r's curs yearn to control, but its secrets are ours. Neither threat nor death will take our knowledge from us."

Reluctant Allies

The Chanhiiri's immediate goal is to avenge their dead by taking on the invaders in area C4. Outnumbered as they are, they have no hope of winning that battle, but these stoics do not fear the death that awaits them. However, they are not suicidal, and they are willing to accept assistance if the PCs offer it. However, if the party tarries here for more than 5 minutes, Talanee and the others head immediately for the portal hall. If the PCs try to stop them, see the "Shoot First, Ask Questions Later" sidebar.

The PCs can take a short rest while they speak to Talanee. The githyanki in area C4 are preoccupied with their work there, and they do not enter this chamber during that time.

The PCs' movement into the next encounter triggers the appearance of the Freeriders in the same area. When the PCs are ready to move (or if the Chanhiiri force their hand), go to the next page.

Shoot First, Ask Questions Later

This section of the adventure assumes that the PCs establish a detente (however tenuous) with the Chanhiiri. However, if the party isn't diplomatically inclined, don't labor the point.

If Talanee and the other surviving priests are attacked or cornered, they fight back. Talanee is a githyanki astraan (use the statistics block from Encounter W2), while her followers include five githyanki warmongers (Encounter C2) and four githyanki blademasters (Encounter C4). Nonminions have half their normal hit points to reflect the harsh treatment they have received. The Chanhiiri take a –2 penalty to all defenses for their lack of armor and poor physical condition.

In the first round of combat, a Chanhiiri githyanki deals 1d6 + 2 damage with melee attacks as it fights unarmed. In subsequent rounds, the githyanki fall back to the destroyed weapon racks and grab damaged versions of their normal weapons that deal half damage.

Once they have weapons in hand, the Chanhiiri fight their way through to area C4, then take on the githyanki there. The party can make a single DC 27 Diplomacy check to cease hostilities with the Chanhiiri. Up to two PCs can aid the character making the check.

C4: Portal Hall

Encounter Level 18 (11,200 XP)

Cross-Fire

As the PCs have worked their way through Chanhiir, Megan Swiftblade and the Freeriders have cut their own path through the githyanki invaders from the opposite cavern entrance. Whether the PCs wait to enter this area or come through immediately from Encounter C3, the Freeriders are there to meet them.

If the PCs haven't already investigated the connecting passage and the doors between areas C3 and C4, incorporate the read-aloud text from the previous encounter as appropriate.

If the PCs have allied themselves with the Chanhiiri, Talanee and the others follow the party's lead as regards entering this area. However, if the previous encounter ended in a confrontation with the priests, this encounter likely begins with the Chanhiiri bursting through the doors at the same time the Freeriders attack from the other direction. Rework the read-aloud text in this section accordingly.

As the PCs or the Chanhiiri prepare to enter this area, read:

From beyond the second set of double doors comes a sudden shout of alarm and the sounds of combat. Over the clash of swords and the shrieks of dying githyanki, the familiar voice of Megan Swiftblade rings out. "You laid claim to Elsir Vale, but our lands still stand free! Our people will not kneel to you, mudskin, nor will the wider world you covet! We will not fall!"

When the PCs can see into the chamber, read:

Before the stairs on the far side of the hall, Megan Swiftblade stands with the severed head of a githyanki captain clutched by the hair. The Freeriders are bloodied but defiant behind her, the githyanki in the chamber spreading out in preparation for attack.

Despite Megan's bravado, the Freeriders are vastly outnumbered and have depleted most of their resources to make it this far. If the PCs opened the doors, the githyanki in this area are aware of their presence. If they looked through the gap in the doors, they can surprise the distracted githyanki.

Setup

5 Freeriders (F)
12 githyanki blademasters (B)
2 githyanki reavers (R)
2 githyanki warmongers (W)

With the githyanki invaders hemmed in by the Freeriders, the PCs, and the Chanhiiri, the portal hall around the World Gate becomes a final battleground.

Tactics

The githyanki warmongers make *telekinetic crush* attacks against the closest PCs, then focus *silver greatsword* attacks against immobilized foes. They repeat that tactic as often as *telekinetic crush* recharges, saving *soulsword burst* until they can affect three or more foes.

The githyanki reavers focus on lightly armored PCs in the hope of a quick kill. Each holds its reaving strike until it is flanking with a blademaster for combat advantage.

The githyanki blademasters flank with each other, the warmongers, or the reavers for combat advantage.

All the githyanki know to stay away from the force sphere, but they do their best to immobilize or stun PCs within its aura (see "Features of the Area"). They reserve their flying powers until they are forced into the sphere, allowing them to flee it without provoking opportunity attacks.

12 Githyanki (B) Blademasters **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 400 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*

⓵ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 8 psychic damage.

⚕ **Twin Longsword Strike** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 12 psychic damage

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki blademaster flies 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 12 (+9)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, 2 silver longswords

2 Githyanki Reavers (R) **Level 17 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,600 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 197; **Bloodied** 98
AC 29; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⓵ **Silver Fullblade** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d12 + 4 (crit 2d12 + 28) plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

⚕ **Reaving Strike** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Reliable, Weapon**
+18 vs. Fortitude; 3d12 + 4 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki reaver or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, silver fullblade

Allied Forces

Given the time and complexity involved in doing so, it is not intended that you play out the attacks of the Freeriders and the Chanhiiri in this encounter. Instead, assume that the Freeriders and the Chanhiiri focus on the githyanki minions in the portal hall while the PCs take on the more potent threats of the warmongers and the reavers.

Roll initiative for the Freeriders and the Chanhiiri as separate groups. Each round on its initiative, a group takes out 1d4 - 1 githyanki blademaster minions. On the invaders' initiative, the githyanki fighting Talanee and her followers take out 1d3 - 1 Chanhiiri minions. For the purpose of this combat, assume that Talanee, her nonminion followers, and the Freeriders all survive as long as the PCs do. (See the sidebar on page 65 for information on Talanee and her followers.)

If the combat goes on long enough that the Freeriders and the Chanhiiri run out of minions to kill, have reinforcements arrive through the door the Freeriders entered through—a mix of blademasters and githyanki psychic archers (see Encounter G6). These are additional githyanki that the Freeriders bypassed in one of the closed chambers in the other part of the temple.

When the fight is done, award the PCs full experience for all creatures noted in the setup for the encounter, even those defeated by the Freeriders and the Chanhiiri.

2 Githyanki Warmongers (W)	Level 17 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,600 each
Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +11	
HP 162; **Bloodied** 81	
AC 33; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*	
Silver Greatsword (standard; at-will) ✦ Psychic, Weapon +24 vs. AC; 2d10 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, plus 3d8 extra psychic damage if the target is immobilized or stunned.	
Telekinetic Crush (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter) Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.	
Soulsword Burst (standard; requires silver greatsword; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon** Close burst 1; +22 vs. Will; 3d10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and is stunned (save ends both).	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15)	**Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+11)
Con 18 (+12)	**Int** 16 (+11) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword	

Features of the Area

Illumination: The burning altars fill the chamber with bright light.

Ceiling: 40 feet high from the floor of the chamber; 30 feet from the highest terrace along the wall.

Terraces: The chamber is cut into wide tiers of amphitheater seating. These 3-foot-high oversized steps can be descended at full speed, but moving up a tier requires either 1 additional square of movement or a DC 10 Athletics check.

Stairs: The stairs leading down through the tiers are normal terrain.

Dais: The dais at the center of the chamber is 3 feet high. It costs 1 extra square of movement to hop up on the dais.

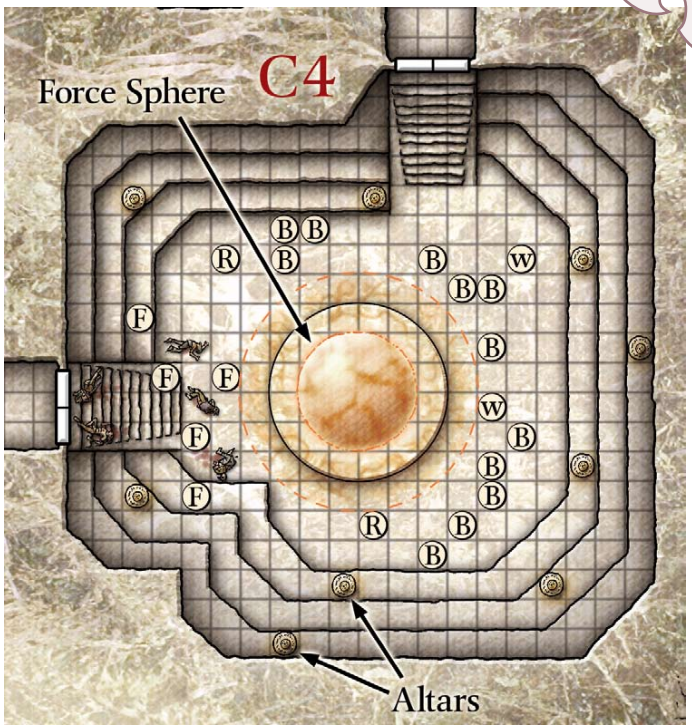
Bodies: The bodies of dead githyanki killed by the Freeriders are difficult terrain.

Altars: These wide stone altars burn with magical fire fueled by the essence of the Astral Sea. The 3-foot-high altars require a DC 13 Athletics check to jump or climb across. However, a creature that begins its turn adjacent to or passes over an altar takes 1d10 fire and radiant damage. A creature that begins its turn on an altar takes 2d10 fire and radiant damage and is dazed until the end of its turn.

Force Sphere: Like the astral vents in Encounter C1, the force sphere protecting the teleportation circle is a defensive ward of the temple that the invading githyanki cannot shut down. The tendrils of energy that lash out into the room act as an aura 4 centered on the sphere (marked by a dotted line on the tactical map). A creature that starts and ends its turn within the aura is struck by a tendril of energy that deals 1d8 psychic damage and gives it vulnerable 5 psychic (save ends).

A creature that attempts to move into the sphere takes 2d8 psychic damage and is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

Treasure: If you place treasure parcels in this area, double the amount of treasure found and award half to the Freeriders, allowing the PCs to retain the correct amount. The Freeriders have claimed their own treasure as they fought their way into the temple and need no share of anything the PCs found in earlier encounters.



W1: Sovereign Gate

Encounter Level 17 (8,000 XP)

Setup

Astral shade

The domed chamber into which the PCs step by way of the World Gate is infused with a haze of white light–astral essence coalescing around the Sovereign Gate.

When the PCs step through the World Gate in the fane of Chanhiir, read:

The domed chamber into which you are transported is a haze of white light beyond which the walls are a faint blur. The brightness here drives into your eyes like knives, a current of arcane power twisting through you. The portal platform extends to a closed doorway directly ahead, an astral haze shimmering to either side like a wide pool of gently rippling water.

See "Features of the Area" for information on the effect of the white light and the astral haze that surrounds the platform.

Perception Check

DC 25: *The haze of white light ripples on the platform ahead as a shapeless creature slowly materializing there.*

The astral shade is a wraithlike apparition of astral essence, featureless and silent. Although the PCs' whitefire marks grant them access to the Well of Worlds, this guardian creature attacks any non-githyanki not in the company of a githyanki escort. If the PCs do not detect it, the astral shade attacks with surprise when the first character moves more than halfway toward the doors.

In addition to this threat, the PCs are hindered by a flare-up of astral energy that infects their whitefire marks. See the "Tested by Fire" sidebar for information.

Tactics

The astral shade targets the closest PCs with *astral chains* and uses *radiant ray* to engage other PCs and slide them into the astral haze. It invokes *astral shockwave* early, in case the power is recharged by a PC who discovers its vulnerability.

Astral Shade	**Level 17 Solo Lurker**
Large immortal humanoid	XP 8,000
Initiative +19	**Senses** Perception +11; blindsight 10, darkvision
HP 448; **Bloodied** 224	
AC 29; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial; **Vulnerable** force (the next attack against the astral shade ignores its insubstantial)	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed fly 10 (hover), teleport 6; phasing	
Action Points 2	
Astral Slam (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**	
+20 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 4 radiant damage and the target gains vulnerable 10 to radiant damage until the end of the astral shade's next turn. If the astral shade is bloodied, the target is also restrained (save ends).	
Radiant Ray (minor; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**	
One or two targets; +22 vs. Reflex; 3d8 radiant damage, and the target slides 1 square. If the astral shade is bloodied, the attack instead deals 3d8 + 5 radiant damage and slides the target 2 squares.	
Wrathful Strike (immediate reaction; when damaged by an attack; at-will)	
The astral shade teleports 4 squares and makes an astral slam attack or a radiant ray attack.	
Astral Shockwave (standard; recharges when the astral shade takes force damage) ✦ **Force**	
Close burst 3; +20 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 5 force damage and the target is pushed 5 squares.	
Radiant Chains (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Radiant**	
Close burst 3; +20 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 5 radiant damage and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +20	
Str 21 (+13)	**Dex** 24 (+15)	**Wis** 16 (+11)
Con 16 (+11)	**Int** 18 (+12)	**Cha** 21 (+13)

If it does not have to move, the astral shade takes two minor actions per round to make four *radiant ray* attacks in addition to its melee or close attack. It spends its action points only on rounds in which it does not move, making four *radiant ray* attacks and two *radiant chains* or *astral shockwave* attacks.

Development

The astral shade pursues the PCs into any part of the Well of Worlds. The githyanki in area W2 cannot hear the sounds of combat in this area, but they immediately notice any fight that spills past the doors. They grab up weapons and join the fray alongside the astral shade 3 rounds later, making for a memorable (and possibly lethal) combined encounter.

Tested by Fire

The whitefire marks that allow servants of the githyanki to access the Well of Worlds exact a cost that the PCs are heretofore unaware of. Starting in the third round after the party arrives here, the planar energy coursing through the Well of Worlds causes each PC's sigil to flare up in a blaze of astral fire.

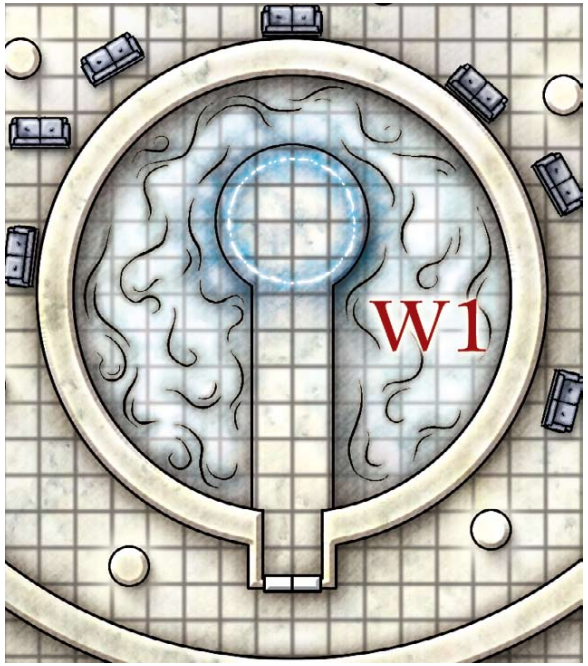
At the beginning of each of his or her turns, a PC has a chance to overcome this effect with a DC 25 Arcana or Endurance check. On a failed check, the PC takes 2d8 damage and is dazed until the end of his or her turn.

Once the PC makes a successful check, he or she is no longer affected, although the sigils continue to burn brighter while the party remains in the Well of Worlds. This effect occurs throughout the Well of Worlds, so that a PC must continue to make checks even after this encounter is over until he or she overcomes the affect.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Astral energy infusing this area fills the chamber with bright light. However, the intensity of that light has a debilitating effect on creatures that linger here.

A creature can ignore the effect of the light for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). Thereafter, creatures with normal vision or low-light vision treat all other creatures in the area as if they had concealment. Creatures with darkvision treat all creatures in the area as if they had total concealment. Creatures closing or covering their eyes gain no respite from the light. Blindsight, tremorsense, and powers or other effects that allow a creature to ignore concealment or total concealment work normally to counteract this effect.



Ceiling: The dome of the ceiling rises to a height of 30 feet in the center of the chamber.

Platform: A platform of white stone suspended in the center of the dome runs from the teleport circle to the door. The platform has no edge or railing. Creatures knocked off the platform do not fall, but are suspended in the haze of astral energy that fills the chamber.

Teleportation Circle: The Sovereign Gate is a permanent teleportation circle and true portal that functions only for full-blooded githyanki or creatures that possess a whitefire mark. See "The Sovereign Gate" on page 51 for more information.

Astral Haze: The haze of astral energy filling the chamber is hazardous to any creatures within it, including those knocked off the platform and those that fly more than 10 feet above or away from the platform. A creature that begins its turn in the astral haze must make a DC 20 Endurance check. With a successful check, a creature takes 1d10 radiant damage. On a failed check, the creature takes 2d10 radiant damage and is dazed until the beginning of its next turn. The astral shade is immune to these effects.

Though creatures do not fall within it, the astral haze is empty space that offers no resistance necessary for movement. Creatures with a fly speed can move through the astral haze normally. Other characters knocked into the astral haze must be pulled back to the platform.

W2: Githyanki Bivouac

Encounter Level 18 (11,000 XP)

Setup

Githyanki astraan (A)
2 githyanki mindlashers (M)
3 githyanki warmongers (W)

Elite githyanki warriors (including those leading the assault on the world) use this bivouac to draw on the energy of the Well of Worlds, replenishing their resources before heading back into the fray.

When the PCs first see into this area, read:

The curved wall of this huge chamber slowly reveals what appears to be some sort of camp. Well-used leather couches are spread across the stone floor between glowing crystal pillars. From ahead comes the sound of gently falling water.

Perception Check

DC 20: *Over the sound of water, faint voices rise.*

A PC who understands Deep Speech recognizes the voices of githyanki, but they are too far away to be understood.

When the PCs can see the pool at the far side of this area, read:

At the head of the chamber, the camp opens up around a wide pool. Water pours into it from an ornate fountainhead. A half-dozen githyanki sit around its edge, talking quietly.

Perception Check

DC 13: *At the couches beyond where the githyanki sit, weapons, armor, and combat gear are piled high. While these are clearly combat troops, they look ill-prepared for a fight at present.*

This githyanki strike team is currently engaged in an operation in one of the more remote Coalition regions. They have no reason to fear an attack, and they are distracted as the party approaches.

Tactics

Only the astraan has a weapon at hand when combat begins. In the first round, the warmongers forego attacks to rush to their gear and seize their silver greatswords. The mindlashers rely on their non-weapon attacks.

The astraan stays out of melee, relying on *telekinetic blast* and *astral fire* attacks to take care of foes attempting to close. If possible, the astraan uses *telekinetic blast* to target a PC adjacent to the pool, dropping the target into the water.

The mindlashers double-team the same targets in the hope of a quick kill, making *mind crush* attacks, then switching to *psychic slam* to maximize psychic damage dealt.

After retrieving weapons, the warmongers take on the strongest-looking melee combatants, spacing out their *soulsword burst* attacks and ganging up on stunned foes. (The warmongers' statistics block has been updated to reflect their lack of armor.)

If the PCs flee this area, half the surviving githyanki pursue while the other half take the opposite route into Encounter W3. The githyanki surround the PCs as they join their eldritch giant allies in that fight.

Githyanki Astraan (A)	**Level 16 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,400
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +17	
HP 155; **Bloodied** 77; see also *astral ward*	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28; see also *astral ward*	
Speed 8	
Silver Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+21 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Telekinetic Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**	
Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 6 force damage and slide the target 1 square.	
Telekinetic Blast (standard; recharge ⚅)	
Ranged sight; one or two targets; +20 vs. Fortitude; the target is wrenched from the ground and hurled up to 20 feet into the air. A target that strikes a ceiling or other solid object takes 1d10 damage. The target then falls back to the ground into an unoccupied space within 1 square of its original space (the astraan's choice), taking falling damage as normal.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki astraan or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.	
Astral Fire (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold, Fire**	
Area burst 2 within 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 cold and fire damage, and the area of the attack becomes difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.	
Astral Ward (immediate interrupt, when the githyanki astraan would be hit by a melee attack while bloodied; encounter)	
The githyanki astraan makes a silver dagger attack against the triggering attacker and gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Arcana +20, Insight +17	
Str 18 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 19 (+12)	
Con 19 (+12) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)	
Equipment silver dagger	

2 Githyanki Mindlashers (M)	Level 18 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,400 each
Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +20	
HP 132; **Bloodied** 66	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 8; see also *telekinetic leap*	
(+) **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+25 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 psychic damage.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindlasher or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.	
Mind Crush (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Psychic**	
Area burst 2 within 20; +23 vs. Will; 1d10 damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target gains vulnerable 10 psychic and can make only basic attacks (save ends).	
Psychic Slam (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Area burst 2 within 10; +23 vs. Will; 2d8 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills History +11, Insight +12	
Str 22 (+15) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 22 (+15)	
Con 18 (+13) **Int** 20 (+14) **Cha** 14 (+11)	
Equipment silver longsword	

3 Githyanki Warmongers (W)	Level 17 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,600 each
Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +11	
HP 162; **Bloodied** 81	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 8; see also *telekinetic leap*	
(+) **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+24 vs. AC; 2d10 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, plus 3d8 extra psychic damage if the target is immobilized or stunned.	
Telekinetic Crush (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.	
Soulsword Burst (standard; requires silver greatsword; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Close burst 1; +22 vs. Will; 3d10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and is stunned (save ends both).	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+11)	
Con 18 (+12) **Int** 16 (+11) **Cha** 21 (+13)	
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword	

Features of the Area

Illumination: The glowing crystal pillars fill the area with bright light.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Pool: This crystal-clear pool is imbued with powerful healing magic made use of by githyanki passing through the Well of Worlds. Creatures who drink from the pool while taking a short rest gain the benefit of an extended rest instead.

The pool is attuned to the githyanki, who can make repeated use of it. Other creatures (even those possessing a whitefire mark) disrupt the pool's magic. Up to five such creatures can make use of the pool, after which it takes 24 hours to recharge. (Adjust this number based on the number of characters in the party if necessary.)

Despite its healing properties, the energy of the pool is too potent for prolonged exposure. A creature that begins its turn in the pool takes 2d10 damage and loses 1 healing surge.

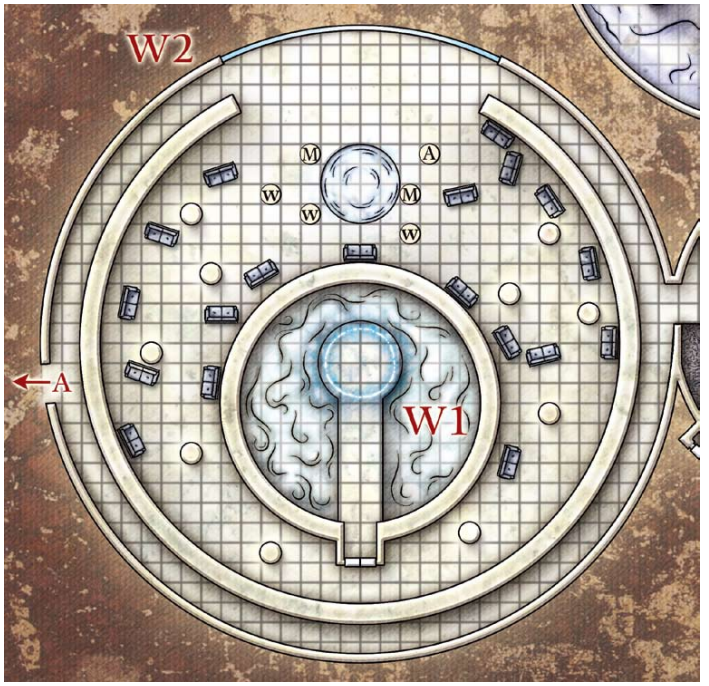
Crystal Pillars: These pillars run from floor to ceiling and provide cover.

Couches: Leather couches spread throughout the chamber are used by githyanki troops passing through the Well of Worlds. A couch provides cover. It costs 1 additional square of movement to hop up on a couch. A character can make a DC 10 Strength check to tip over a couch, which then grants superior cover.

One for the Road

With a DC 30 Arcana check, a character can bottle one dose of the pool's water in a way that retains its magical essence for 24 hours. These unique potions can be used by the PCs during Part Three of the adventure, when they will be unable to take an extended rest.

Further use of the pool in this way remains entirely at your discretion. If access to this magic seems likely to be unbalancing, simply say that shutting down the work the githyanki have done to expand the effect of the Well of Worlds has diminished the pool's power.



W3: Hall of Shards

Encounter Level 16 (7,200 XP)

Setup

2 eldritch giants (G)

This wide chamber is the nexus point through which planar energy is funneled to fuel the astral vortex at the heart of the Well of Worlds. The eldritch giants here are servants of the githyanki, and they bear the same whitefire mark as the fomorians in the temple. Both are ritualists engaged in channeling the power of the Well of Words into the wider githyanki portal network.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

White light ahead marks the boundary of a circular chamber whose floor and ceiling are composed of huge crystal shards. Pure planar energy surges within the shards, which focus and hone it like lenses into twin pulsing spheres of white light at the bottom and top of the chamber.

Twin platforms run along the outer walls of this hall of shards, carved of the same white stone as the wider bridge running between sealed doors at the chamber's center. On the bridge, two giants sit cross-legged as if in meditation. Both have their backs turned to you as they pore over what appear to be open ritual books. Violet-skinned and hairless, these creatures are unarmed and unarmored, their bare flesh covered with runic tattoos glowing red and black.

Perception Check

DC 20: *Hidden within the pulsing gleam of their dark tattoos, the whitefire mark burns at both giants' wrists.*

2 Eldritch Giants (G) — **Level 18 Skirmisher**
Large fey humanoid (giant) — **XP 2,000 each**

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +20; low-light vision
HP 171; **Bloodied** 85
AC 32; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 33
Resist 10 force
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects
Speed 8, teleport 6

Eldritch Blade (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force, Weapon**
Reach 2; +21 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 7 force damage.

Force Missile (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Ranged 20; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 force damage.

Sweeping Sword (standard; encounter) ✦ **Force, Weapon**
Close blast 2; +21 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Special:* When charging, the eldritch giant can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.

Consume Magic (minor 1/round; at-will)
Targets an adjacent conjuration or zone created by an enemy; +21 vs. the Will of the creator of the conjuration or zone; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, and its effects end. The eldritch giant's attacks deal 3d6 extra force damage until the end of its next turn.

Eldritch Field (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Zone**
Close blast 5; the blast creates a zone of rippling magic that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the eldritch giant uses this power again. The zone is difficult terrain, and the giant's attacks deal 1d6 extra force damage against creatures within the zone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Elven, Giant
Skills Arcana +21, Insight +20

Str 21 (+14)	**Dex** 12 (+10)	**Wis** 22 (+15)
Con 19 (+13)	**Int** 24 (+16)	**Cha** 13 (+10)

Astral Nexus Hazard — **Level 17 Elite Blaster**
XP 3,200

Tendrils of white light begin to peel off where the crystal shards focus planar energy into spheres of pure astral essence.

Hazard: The flood of planar energy flares in unexpected and dangerous ways as it is focused and distilled here to pure astral essence.

Perception
✦ No Perception check is necessary to notice the energy of the astral nexus.

Additional Skill: Arcana
✦ DC 20: The character recognizes the nature of the astral nexus and its uncontrolled energy, gaining a +2 bonus to Arcana checks made to avoid the hazard's effects (see "Countermeasures," below).

Trigger
The first time a creature uses an arcane power in the area, the astral nexus becomes dangerously unstable and the hazard rolls initiative.

Attack
Standard Action **Melee**
Target: One creature within the area
Attack: +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, ongoing 5 radiant damage (save ends), and the trap makes a secondary attack.
Secondary Attack: Close burst 2 centered on the primary target; +24 vs. Reflex
Target: Each creature in the burst other than the primary target
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Countermeasures
✦ A character can make a DC 27 Arcana check as a standard action to calm the local arcane energies. If successful, the character's space and each square adjacent to the character are considered outside the trap's area until the end of the character's next turn.

Special
✦ The confluence of energy here plays havoc with arcane powers. Each time a creature uses an arcane power, roll 1d4 and add the result as a bonus to all attack rolls made with that use of the power. However, at the end of the attacking creature's turn, it must make a saving throw or take 2d10 damage.

Treat all an eldritch giant's powers except its eldritch blade as arcane powers for the purpose of this effect.

Tactics

The eldritch giants face off against the strongest-looking melee combatants with *eldritch blade* or *sweeping sword* attacks, using *force missile* only if all PCs attempt to stay at range. Both giants use *eldritch field* to pin PCs down in areas of difficult terrain, focusing their attacks on any characters stuck in the zone.

Once the eldritch giants are aware of the PCs' presence in the Well of Worlds, they pursue the party into any part of the site.

Development

In the aftermath of combat, the PCs can investigate this place. With a DC 20 Arcana check and 5 minutes study of the ritual books here, a PC recognizes that planar energy is being focused and distilled to pure astral essence by the crystal shards here. With a DC 25 Arcana check, a PC understands that the Well of Worlds powers the Sovereign Gate as some sort of master gate, with connections to githyanki portals across the Astral Sea and the planes. However, a full detailing of this site's power is beyond the PCs' present resources. See "The Githyanki's Secret," page 50, for details.

Features of the Area

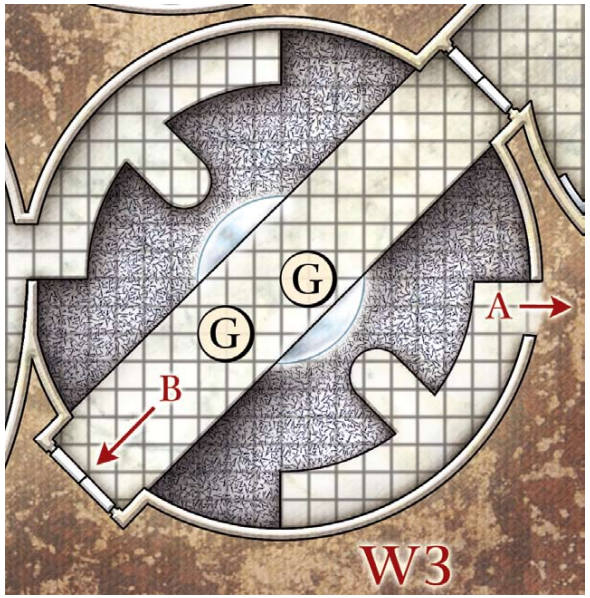
Illumination: The power of the astral nexus floods this area with white light.

Ceiling: The ceiling stands 20 feet above the platforms and bridge; 40 feet above the shard floor. The ceiling is composed of the same immense crystal shards as the floor, and it has its own astral nexus at its center.

Platforms and Bridge: Twin platforms run along the outer walls of the chamber while a wider bridge crosses it, all 20 feet above the shard floor. Characters who fall from a platform or a bridge take 2d10 falling damage and 1d10 damage from the razor-sharp shards.

Walls: The smooth walls of the chamber extend above and below the platforms and the bridge. The walls can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check.

Shard Floor: The immense crystal shards that make up the chamber floor are not meant to be walked upon. A creature must make a DC 13 Athletics check to balance while moving up to half speed on the shard floor; a DC 20 Athletics check while moving up to full speed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the creature falls prone at the end of its move and takes 1d10 damage.



Astral Nexus: The twin spheres of astral energy at the center of the shard floor and ceiling create a hazard and play havoc with arcane powers. See the statistics block.

A creature that is forced into or attempts to enter the astral nexus takes 2d10 radiant damage and is pushed 2 squares. The creature is knocked prone, takes 1d10 damage from the razor-sharp shards of the floor, and is dazed until the beginning of its next turn.

W4: The Stair Gate

Encounter Level 17 (8,800 XP)

Setup

4 marauder planestalkers

The twisting flight of stairs leading down to the heart of the Well of Worlds is blocked by a magically barred floor. In addition, four planar guardians attack any creatures except githyanki that venture here.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

The doorway from the hall of shards opens upon a round chamber of pale gray stone. The air here flares with swirling currents of white light—four circular mirrors are set along the walls, their surfaces rippling like quicksilver. In the center of the chamber, the stone floor disappears to be replaced by an uneven grid of black steel bars. A stone plinth stands at the center of the barred floor, its sides set with glowing keyholes. Beneath the bars, steep ivory stairs twist down into a haze of white light.

Arcana Check

DC 25: *The ambient astral energy here is harmless, but a stronger pulse of arcane power surges in the four mirrors. Something lurks within their silvered surfaces, waiting to be called forth.*

The marauder planestalkers appear one per round starting the third round after a PC enters this area. If the PCs do not note the threat with an Arcana check, the first planestalker attacks with surprise.

4 Marauder Planestalkers **Level 17 Lurker**
Large aberrant magical beast XP 1,600 each

Initiative +19 **Senses** Perception +13; low-light vision
HP 129; **Bloodied** 64
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28
Resist see planephase form; **Vulnerable** psychic; a marauder planestalker that takes psychic damage immediately ends planephase form.
Speed 7; teleport 5; see also *planar evasion, planephase form*

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 3d6 + 6 damage.

ǂ **Body Snatch** (standard; usable only in *planephase form*; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
+21 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 6 damage, and both the target and the marauder planestalker are teleported to an extradimensional space that completely encloses both creatures. The space is 2 squares high and 4 squares wide on each side. Other creatures do not have line of effect or line of sight to the target or the planestalker, and the target and planestalker do not have line of sight or line of effect to other creatures.
If the planestalker takes 25 damage, if it is killed, or if the target is killed, the target and the planestalker return to the spaces they occupied before being teleported, or to the nearest available spaces.

Dimensional Disjunction (standard; encounter)
Close blast 3; +19 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes 10 extra damage from melee attacks (save ends).

Planar Evasion (immediate reaction, when the marauder planestalker is hit by a melee attack; recharge ⚅ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**
The marauder planestalker teleports 3 squares.

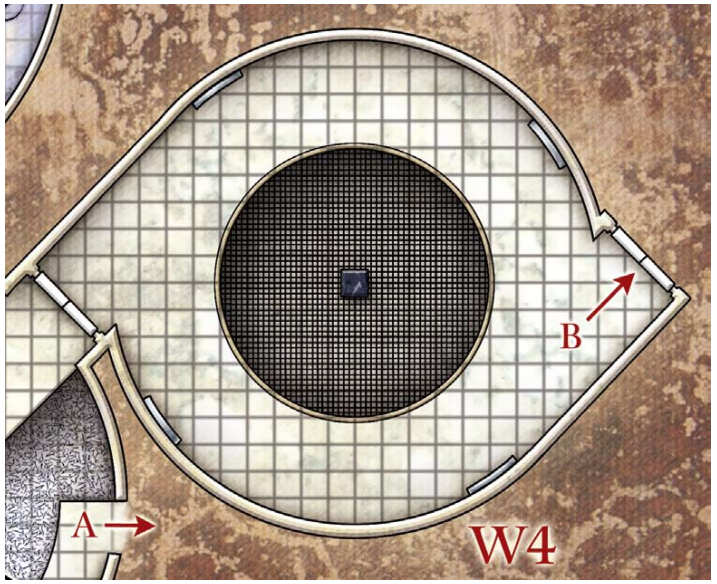
Planephase Form (standard; sustain minor; at-will)
The marauder planestalker partially phases into another plane, gaining the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the end of its next turn or until it attacks. *Sustain Minor*: The effect persists.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Bluff +14, Insight +18, Stealth +20
Str 16 (+11) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 21 (+13)
Con 21 (+13) **Int** 7 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+9)

Tactics

The marauder planestalkers split up to take on single PCs, going into *planephase form*, then attempting to use their *body snatch* power to prevent the characters from aiding each other in combat. If caught out of *planephase form*, they target as many PCs as possible with *dimensional disjunction*, then make bite attacks for increased damage.

The marauder planestalkers do not pursue PCs who flee back to area W3. However, see the skill challenge for information on pursuit into area W5.



Features of the Area

Illumination: This area is suffused with bright light.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Stair Gate: Access to the ivory stairs is blocked by a floor of uneven black steel bars, set across the chamber on a 1-foot grid. A Small character can squeeze through the narrow bars with a DC 27 Acrobatics check, granting access to the stairs and area W5. This creates no advantage in the skill challenge. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character takes 2d10 radiant damage from a feedback surge of astral energy through the bars.

A creature must make a DC 13 Athletics check to balance while moving across the uneven bars of the stair gate. On a failed check, the creature falls prone at the end of its move. The Acrobatics check to move across the grid is in addition to the Acrobatics check a character can make in the skill challenge.

Plinth: The black onyx plinth at the center of the stair gate features four keyholes attuned to the crystal keys that control the Well of Worlds (see "The Githyanki's Secret" on page 50). Picking the magical locks is not enough to open the stair gate; its wards can be overcome only by the skill challenge. When the stair gate vanishes, the plinth remains behind, floating in midair.

Ivory Stairs: These steep curved stairs are difficult terrain. The ivory stairs begin below the stair gate, descending more than 300 feet to area W5.

Stair Gate **Level 19**
Skill Challenge XP 2,400

A flight of worn stone steps descends into the astral vortex at the heart of the Well of Worlds. However, unlocking the stair gate requires a powerful effort of will and perseverance.

To pass through to the astral vortex, the PCs must break through the powerful magic wards of the gate that blocks the stairs leading down.

Complexity
5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
Arcana, Athletics, Thievery.

Other Skills
Acrobatics, Perception.

Victory
The wards of the stair gate are shut down, causing the grid of black bars to flare brilliant white, then vanish. Each creature in the area not capable of flight must make a DC 13 Acrobatics or Athletics check to jump to the safety, either catching the edge of the floor or hanging onto the stone plinth that stays suspended in midair. On a failed check, a creature falls to the stairs and takes 2d10 falling damage before coming to a halt.
With the stairs open, the PCs can descend to the astral vortex below. Any surviving marauder planestalkers do not follow PCs who choose to flee down the stairs.

Defeat
The PCs overload the wards of the ivory stairs, destroying the bars of the stair gate in a blast of arcane energy that deals 2d10 force damage to all creatures in the chamber. In addition, a creature in the area of the bars not capable of flight falls to the stairs and takes 2d10 falling damage before coming to a halt.
The PCs can descend to the astral vortex. However, if any marauder planestalkers survive, they pursue the PCs down the stairs to join the githyanki guardian shade in Encounter W5.

Special
In addition to weakening the gate stairs with brute force by using an Athletics check, a PC can target the gate with a weapon attack or a nonweapon power that deals force damage. The gate has AC 33, Fortitude/Reflex 31, 120 hit points, and resist 5 to all damage. Every 10 points of damage dealt to the gate earns the party 1 success in the skill challenge. Any attack that deals no damage after the gate's resistance is taken into account earns the party 1 failure in the skill challenge.
If the gate is destroyed, the party earns an automatic victory in the skill challenge.

Acrobatics
DC 14 (no successes or failures) With a successful check (a minor action), a character gains a +2 bonus to his or her next primary skill check in the challenge.
Affecting the wards of the gate is easiest from directly atop it, but the uneven grid requires careful balance.

Arcana
DC 22 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes) With a successful check, the PC exploits that interference to destabilize the wards.
The astral energy surging around the stairs interferes with the arcane wards of the gate.

Athletics
DC 27 (1 success or failure) By damaging the gate with brute force, the PC weakens the wards. See also "Special," below.
The arcane wards of the gate are inextricably bound to its physical strength.

Perception
DC 22 (0 successes or failures) With a successful check (a minor action), a character gains a +2 bonus to his or her next primary skill check in the challenge.
The ever-shifting astral energy within the chamber ebbs and flows in a pattern that can be discerned.

Thievery
DC 22 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes) With a successful Thievery check, the PC weakens the gate and the wards.
The strength of the gate wards is tied to its ancient construction.

W5: Astral Vortex

Encounter Level 20 (14,000 XP)

Setup

Eldritch giant (G)
Githyanki guardian shade

At the heart of the Well of Worlds, a vast astral vortex powers the githyanki's system of permanent teleportation circles in the world and beyond.

As the PCs descend the stairs into this area, read:

White light seethes in a corrosive whirlpool filling a vast chamber below. The air is hazy above a stone platform extending from the bottom of the stairs across the seething vortex. Pillars of glowing stone rise above the maelstrom, their surfaces crawling with an ever-shifting flow of arcane runes.

The far side of the chamber is taken up with what appears to be an oversized arcanist's study. Tall shelves and wide tables are covered with well-worn tomes and tattered scrolls. A violet-skinned eldritch giant glances up in surprise at your approach, the whitefire mark burning at his wrist as he holds up a hand in warning.

"I am Haryssus. It has been long years since any but the masters of this place breached the stair gate, but those who did so lived no longer than will you. I have no quarrel with you. Flee while you can."

Perception Check

DC 22: *At the giant's hands and feet, a faint blur of eldritch energy takes the form of all-but-invisible restraints binding this creature to its workplace.*

Insight Check

DC 22: *Despite the giant's dismissive demeanor, his voice carries an undertone of weariness, not of anger. His words are no threat, but a warning of imminent danger.*

The presence of intruders in the well chamber sends ripples into the astral vortex, from which the githyanki guardian shade is summoned in 1 round. Unless the PCs discern the giant's warning with a successful Insight check, the guardian shade materializes next to as many PCs as possible and attacks with surprise.

When the githyanki guardian shade appears, read:

A sudden flare of yellow-white light heralds the appearance of a ghostly githyanki. Larger than the shades you fought in the fane, this creature wields twin bastard swords, a white light burning in its eyes as it attacks.

Tactics

Each round, the githyanki guardian shade attacks as many PCs as possible with *bladed wrath*, then targets another with *spirit rake* after teleporting away. It uses *soul strike* as frequently as possible, but especially on foes that demonstrate resistance to psychic damage, and it targets creatures hit with *soul strike* with multiple *spirit rakes*.

Haryssus avoids entering the fight at first, knowing that he will be tortured by the githyanki if the PCs are defeated. However, once the guardian shade is bloodied, the eldritch giant cautiously aids the PCs with *force missile* attacks each round. (At your option, Haryssus can enter the fight earlier if the PCs are in danger of being soundly defeated.)

Haryssus cannot leave the platform to which he is bound, but if the PCs attack him at any point, he defends himself vigorously (use the statistics block and tactics from Encounter W3). Once the giant enters combat against the PCs, it takes two DC 27 Diplomacy checks (each a minor action) to get him to stand down during combat. See also "Development," below.

Githyanki Guardian Shade (G) Level 20 Solo Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (undead) XP 14,000

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +21; darkvision
Guardian Presence (Psychic) aura 1; while the githyanki guardian shade is bloodied, each creature that starts its turn adjacent to it takes 5 psychic damage.
HP 756; **Bloodied** 378
AC 34; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 28
Immune disease, poison
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8, fly 8
Action Points 2

Ghost Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses and is slowed (save ends both).

Spirit Rake (minor; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**
Ranged 5; +23 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Bladed Wrath (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Burst 3; targets enemies; the githyanki guardian shade pulls the target 2 squares, then makes a ghost sword attack against each adjacent enemy. *Effect:* The githyanki guardian shade teleports up to 8 squares.

Guardian Fury (immediate reaction; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Burst 2; +23 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 force damage and the target is pushed 3 squares.

Soul Strike (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅, recharge ⚃ ⚄ ⚅ while bloodied) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
Slowed targets only; +23 vs. Will; 4d10 + 10 radiant damage, and the target gains vulnerable 15 psychic until the end of its next turn.

Soul Bolt (standard; encounter, recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +23 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the githyanki guardian shade's next turn. *Miss:* Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the githyanki guardian shade's next turn.

Astral Soul (immediate reaction, when the githyanki guardian shade takes damage; encounter)
The githyanki guardian shade becomes insubstantial and gains phasing until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** – (understands Common, Deep Speech)

Str 25 (+17)	**Dex** 23 (+23)	**Wis** 21 (+15)
Con 21 (+21)	**Int** 19 (+19)	**Cha** 26 (+18)

Development

Even if the PCs attacked Haryssus, he stands down automatically once the githyanki guardian shade is destroyed. The eldritch giant's bonds can be undone with a simple Break Enchantment ritual, but the arcane wards that hold him here prevent Haryssus from performing the ritual himself.

Once freed, the eldritch giant becomes a staunch ally of the PCs and an invaluable source of information regarding the Well of Worlds. The PCs can attempt to talk to him, but the advanced planar magic of the Well of Worlds is beyond the understanding of any but the most knowledgeable mages. The PCs should be inspired to have Haryssus talk to Bejam, but respond to any questions here by paraphrasing the information given in "The Githyanki's Secret" (page 50).

Features of the Area

Illumination: This area is suffused with bright light.

Ceiling: The ceiling rises 40 feet above the astral vortex; 30 feet above the platform bridge and the library floor.

Ivory Stairs: These steep curved stairs are difficult terrain. The ivory stairs run up to the stair gate, ascending more than 300 feet to area W4.

Shelves: These bookshelves are stacked high with scholarly tomes focusing on planar and portal magic. These works provide essential information regarding the Well of Worlds (see "The Githyanki's Secret," page 50).

Tables: These giant-sized tables are tall enough that a Medium or smaller creature can move under one and gain cover. It costs 2 squares of movement for a Large or larger creature to hop up onto a table. A Medium or smaller creature can climb or swing up to the top of a table with a DC 14 Athletics or Acrobatics check (a move action). A character can make a DC 20 Strength check to tip over a table, which then grants superior cover.

Chair: The giant-sized chair provides cover.

Pillars: Pillars of glowing white stone rise above the astral vortex to the height indicated on the tactical map. Each pillar glows with a shifting sequence of arcane runes. A creature can jump from the platform to a pillar, or from pillar to pillar, with an Athletics check as normal.

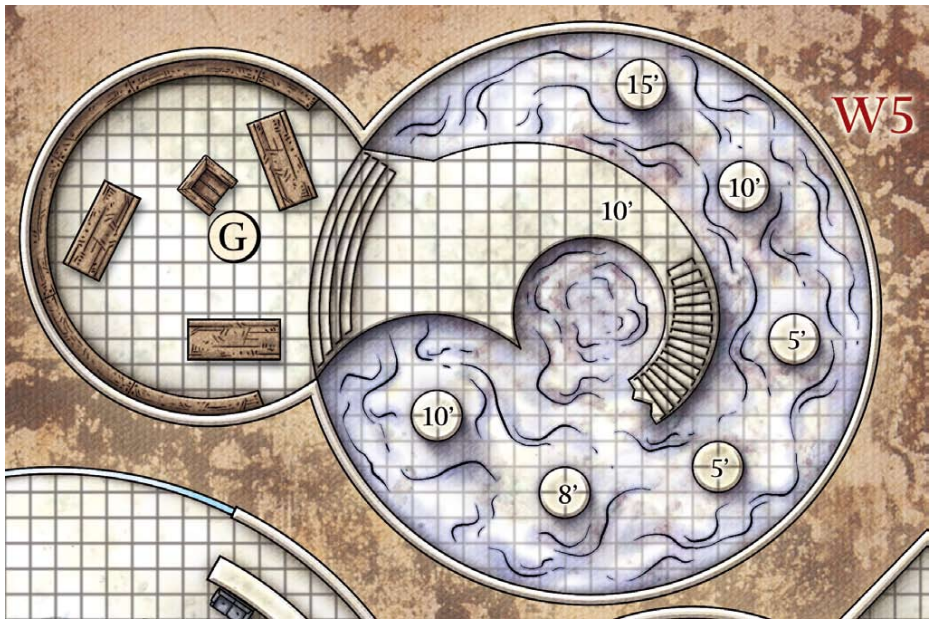
Platform: A slick stone platform runs from the stairs to the giant's study, passing 10 feet above the astral vortex. The platform can be moved along normally, but a Medium or smaller creature that makes a melee attack while in a square on the edge of the platform must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or stumble and fall over the edge. A creature that falls from the platform takes 1d10 falling damage and is caught up in the astral vortex.

Astral Vortex: This vast whirlpool of astral essence seethes and boils at the heart of the Well of Worlds. A creature that begins its turn adjacent to the vortex (either along the platform or in the library) or atop one of the pillars takes 2d8 radiant damage.

A creature that falls into the astral vortex is swept up in its flow, circling the pool at one revolution per round. A creature in the vortex takes 3d10 radiant damage per round and is dazed until the end of its next turn.

A creature in the vortex can make a DC 27 Athletics or Acrobatics check as a free action to grab a pillar. It then takes a DC 15 Athletics check (a move action) to climb to the top of the pillar. (Because the creature circles the pool, it can choose which pillar it grabs onto.) A creature that escapes the vortex is still dazed until the end of its next turn.

The speed of the vortex makes it difficult to coordinate attempts to reach creatures trapped within it. It takes a DC 22 Acrobatics check to throw a rope in front of a creature in the vortex. The creature must then make a DC 14 Acrobatics or Athletics check to grab it. A creature that grabs a rope can be pulled out of the vortex as a standard action.



G1: Dock Siege

Encounter Level 18 (11,000 XP)

Setup

Githyanki astraan (A)
12 githyanki gish crusaders (C)
3 githyanki reavers (R)

As the battle for Garaitha's anvil gets underway, the PCs use the shock of the assault to move for the repair dock where *Cev'ren* is moored.

When the PCs break for the construction zone, read:

The battle rages ahead of you, an offensive wedge pushing the frenzied githyanki back. Lost in the chaos of the clash of forces, your movement away from the brunt of the fight and toward the gantries of the construction zone goes all but unnoticed. A single force of a dozen githyanki catches sight of you, spreading out into an attack formation at your approach.

Tactics

The gish crusaders fight in groups of two or three, flanking for combat advantage. They make *silver longsword* attacks against lightly armored foes, but use *astral bolt* against heavily armored foes.

The githyanki astraan stays at range if possible, hitting PC strikers and controllers with *telekinetic blast* and *astral fire*.

The githyanki reavers focus *silver fullblade* and *reaving strike* attacks against lightly armored PCs.

The githyanki fight the party on the ground until two or more PCs make a move for the catwalks. On the astraan's orders, the crusaders use *astral stride* to fall back to the catwalk platforms. The astraan uses *telekinetic leap* to fly to the closest catwalk, while the reavers continue to throw themselves at PCs on the ground.

This encounter remains part of the larger battle raging around the PCs. In the fourth round and every second round thereafter, another 1d6 minions enter the fray—either githyanki gish crusaders, githyanki psychic archers, or githyanki corsair cutters (see Encounter G6 for additional statistics blocks).

Githyanki Astraan (A) **Level 16 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 1,400**

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +17
HP 155; **Bloodied** 77; see also *astral ward*
AC 30; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28; see also *astral ward*
Speed 8

⊕ **Silver Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+21 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

⊛ **Telekinetic Strike** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 6 force damage and slide the target 1 square.

Telekinetic Blast (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃)
Ranged sight; one or two targets; +20 vs. Fortitude; the target is wrenched from the ground and hurled up to 20 feet into the air. A target that strikes a ceiling or other solid object takes 1d10 damage. The target then falls back to the ground into an unoccupied space within 1 square of its original space (the astraan's choice), taking falling damage as normal.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki astraan or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Astral Fire (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold, Fire**
Area burst 2 within 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 cold and fire damage, and the area of the attack becomes difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Astral Ward (immediate interrupt, when the githyanki astraan would be hit by a melee attack while bloodied; encounter)
The githyanki astraan makes a silver dagger attack against the triggering attacker and gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +20, Insight +17
Str 18 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 19 (+12)
Con 19 (+12) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment silver dagger

12 Githyanki (C) Gish Crusaders **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 400 each**

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +15
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *astral stride*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+21 vs. AC; 10 psychic damage.

⊛ **Astral Bolt** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 10 psychic damage.

Astral Stride (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The githyanki gish crusader teleports 6 squares and gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 20 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 14 (+10) **Cha** 18 (+12)
Equipment chainmail, silver longsword

3 Githyanki Reavers (R) **Level 17 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 1,600 each**

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 197; **Bloodied** 98
AC 29; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Fullblade** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d12 + 4 (crit 2d12 + 28) plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Reaving Strike (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Reliable, Weapon**
+18 vs. Fortitude; 3d12 + 4 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki reaver or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, silver fullblade

Development

Once the defenders here have been overcome, the distraction of the surrounding battle allows the PCs to enter the repair dock unseen.

When the PCs open the door leading to areas G2, G3, and G4, read:

A dark corridor opens up on both sides of the door. To the left stands a vast open space whose floor cannot be seen, and booming voices within shout out the words of a ritual. To the right, firelight flares, ringing out with the heavy echo of steel on steel. A third leg of the corridor leads off into shadow ahead.

The PCs can approach area G2 unhindered, but any movement toward G3 or G4 is interrupted. See the G3 tactical encounter.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The exterior shipyard is infused with bright light. The warehouse space and the corridor beyond the door are dark.

Catwalks: These shaky catwalks rise alongside the under-construction walls of the repair dock expansion. A catwalk can be moved along normally, but a Medium or smaller creature that makes a melee attack while in a square on the edge of the catwalk must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or stumble and fall over the edge. See the tactical map for the heights of different catwalks relative to the ground.

Ladders: These rough mesh ladders connect the catwalks. It takes a move action and a DC 15 Athletics check to climb 10 feet up a ladder.

Gantry: Each of these gantry towers rises 20 feet above the adjoining catwalk, and each features a crane sling arm for raising cargo from below. A gantry tower provides cover and can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check. A creature engaged in combat on the top of a tower must make a DC 22 Acrobatics check or fall in a square adjacent to the tower's base, chosen randomly.

The sling arm cable hanging from the end of a gantry arm can be jumped to from a nearby catwalk with an Athletics check as normal. (A sling arm that has been moved over a catwalk can be grabbed.) A character who makes the jump snags the cable with a DC 14 Acrobatics check. On a failed check, the character falls.

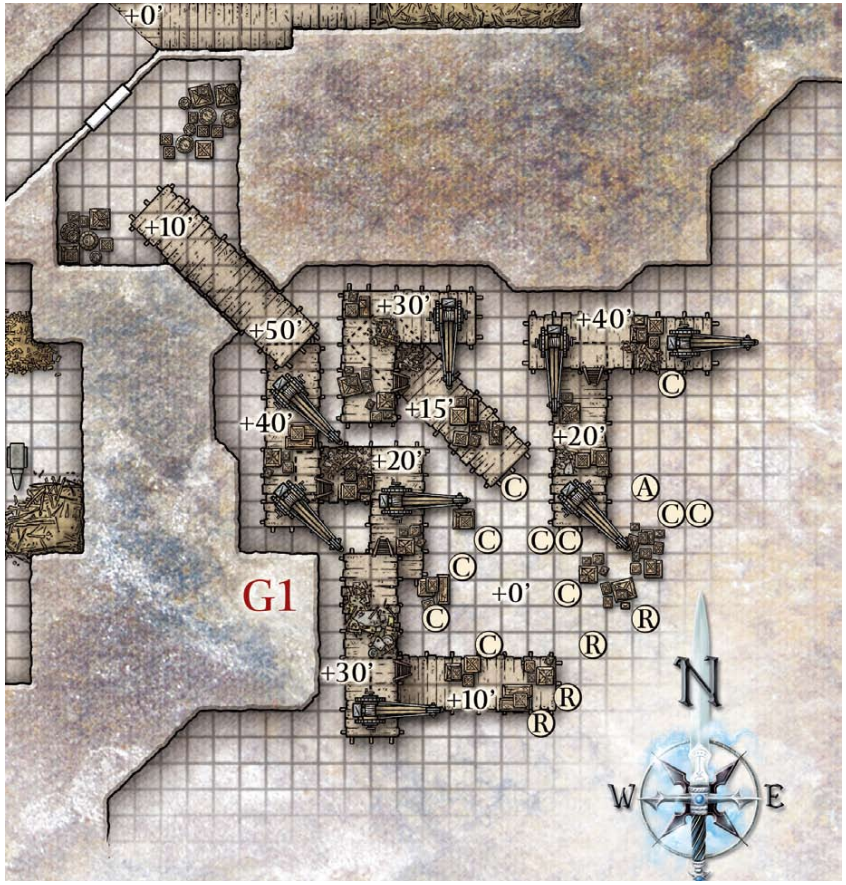
A creature that grabs a cable pulls the gantry arm 45 degrees in the direction of the creature's movement, and can swing out on the cable in the same direction. The creature can then jump from the cable to any nearby catwalk by making an Acrobatics check. Use the DC for an Athletics check to jump the distance from the gantry to the catwalk, but treat the creature as if it has a running start.

Exterior Walls: The under-construction walls of the dock are rough wood and stone. They can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Debris: Loose piles of wood, steel, and detritus are difficult terrain.

Crates: These stacks of construction supplies stand 5 feet high and provide cover. It takes a DC 10 Athletics check to move across a stack of crates.

Opening: The interior of this repair dock is accessed by an open doorway 10 feet above the closest catwalk.



G2: Loading Zone

Encounter Level 19 (12,800 XP; see the hazard statistics block)

Setup

2 eldritch giants (E)
8 fomorian guards (G)

Inside the repair dock, two eldritch giants attempt to reactivate the dead planar magic of the shipyard to bring in reinforcements from the Feywild.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

Sand covers the floor of this massive chamber, its walls piled high with huge ingots of iron and brass, densewood logs of great length and heft, and bundled heaps of deadfall. Two eldritch giants are shouting out the words of a ritual as a teleportation circle flares erratically to life in midair between them. Within the portal stands a hazy landscape of fallen trees and black smoke, and a shower of logs and deadfall spills through it to the sandy floor. At the same time, eight armed fomorians leap through the gate even as it fades away. One of the fomorians howls "Keep those gates open, mage! There's troops waiting to cross and blood to be spilled!"

The magic with which Bejam and Haryssus have inhibited the portals of the shipyard is holding, but these eldritch giants are pushing the limits of those wards. Normally used to transport raw materials from other planes, these floating teleportation circles have been commandeered to bring reinforcements from the Feywild.

If the PCs have already taken on the fire giants in Encounter G3, the creatures here mistook that noise for the ever-present din of the foundry. The eldritch giants and fomorians are distracted and expect no attack. Unless the PCs draw attention to themselves, they can easily gain surprise before the fomorians begin to scale the catwalk on their way to area G5.

Tactics

The fomorian guards flank for combat advantage as they make *evil eye* and halberd attacks. Any nearby fomorian targets an immobilized PC for the extra damage granted by *skullcracker*. The fomorians are tall enough that they can reach the catwalk from the floor. Treat their halberds as reach 1 weapons for such attacks.

The eldritch giants initially fall back to let the fomorians take on melee combatants, making *force missile* attacks in conjunction with *eldritch field* as they teleport away from any challengers. When the fomorians have fallen, the giants create their *eldritch blades* and enter melee.

Each round, one of the eldritch giants uses a minor action to trigger the portal fall hazard after teleporting safely out of range.

Development

If the PCs bypass this encounter to go directly to the repair dock, the creatures here come to the aid of the githyanki in Encounter G4. See the "Reinforcements" sidebar in that encounter for more information.

2 Eldritch Giants (E)	Level 18 Skirmisher
Large fey humanoid (giant)	XP 2,000 each
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +20; low-light vision
HP 171; **Bloodied** 85	
AC 32; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 33	
Resist 10 force	
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects	
Speed 8, teleport 6	
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Eldritch Blade, Weapon**	
Reach 2; +21 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 7 force damage.	
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Force Missile**	
Ranged 20; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 force damage.	
(standard; encounter) ✦ **Sweeping Sword**, Force, Weapon	
Close blast 2; +21 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Special:* When charging, the eldritch giant can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.	
Consume Magic (minor 1/round; at-will)	
Targets an adjacent conjuration or zone created by an enemy; +21 vs. the Will of the creator of the conjuration or zone; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, and its effects end. The eldritch giant's attacks deal 3d6 extra force damage until the end of its next turn.	
Eldritch Field (minor; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Zone**	
Close blast 5; the blast creates a zone of rippling magic that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the eldritch giant uses this power again. The zone is difficult terrain, and the giant's attacks deal 1d6 extra force damage against creatures within the zone.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Elven, Giant
Skills Arcana +21, Insight +20	
Str 21 (+14)	**Dex** 12 (+10)	**Wis** 22 (+15)
Con 19 (+13)	**Int** 24 (+16)	**Cha** 13 (+10)

Portal Fall Hazard — **Level 20 Elite Lurker** — **XP 5,600**

An eldritch giant activates a dormant portal hanging in mid-air, and a deadly avalanche of wood spills from a matching portal in the Feywild and drops toward you.

Hazard: Logs and deadfall tumble down to a target square and make a burst 3 attack.

Perception

Characters can't use Perception to detect this hazard.

Initiative +21

Trigger

Each eldritch giant can, as a minor action once per turn, trigger the trap's attack. **Special:** Though the giants cannot keep the portals open for long, additional fomorians have a chance to cross over from the Feywild the longer the fight goes on. Starting in the fourth round and every round thereafter, each activation of the hazard brings 1d4 - 1 more fomorian guards into the fray. Award the PCs additional experience for any reinforcements they kill.

Attack

Minor Action 1/turn — **Close** burst 1 centered on one enemy

Targets: Creatures in burst
Attack: +23 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage
Effect: The area becomes difficult terrain.

Countermeasures

- ✦ A character who makes an Arcana check at DC 27 as a standard action briefly forces the hidden portals away from his or her area, and the hazard cannot target any creature within a close burst 2 of the character.
- ✦ A character who makes an Arcana check at DC 27 as a minor action briefly forces the hidden portals away from him or her, and the hazard cannot target him or her.
- ✦ When an eldritch giant is killed, the hazard becomes less dangerous, and when both are dead, it ceases to function.

8 Fomorian Guards (G) — **Level 17 Minion Soldier**
Huge fey humanoid (giant) — **XP 400 each**

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +13; truesight 6
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 33; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28
Speed 8

⨁ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 4; +22 vs. AC; 8 damage (13 damage against immobilized targets) and the target is marked until the end of the fomorian guard's next turn.

↝ **Evil Eye** (minor 1/round; at-will)
Ranged 5; +20 vs. Will; the target is immobilized until the end of the fomorian guard's turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, Elven
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 22 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+13)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+10)
Equipment chainmail, halberd

Features of the Area

Illumination: Smoky torches along the walls fill this area with dim light.

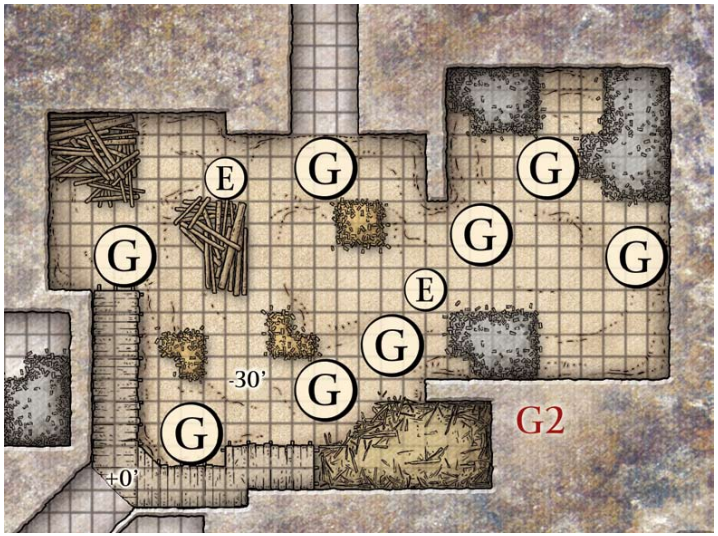
Ceiling: 60 feet high.

Floor: The soft sand floor of the loading zone is difficult terrain for any Medium or smaller creatures.

Catwalk: This shaky catwalk connects to the adjacent passageway and overlooks the floor 30 feet below. The catwalk has no ladders; the giants who work in this area simply climb it. A catwalk can be moved along normally, but a Medium or smaller creature that makes a melee attack while in a square on the edge of a catwalk must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or stumble and fall over the edge. The soft sand floor means that a creature that falls takes only 2d10 damage unless it hits an area of logs dropped by the portal fall hazard.

Ingot Piles: Piles of 2-foot-long iron or brass ingots rise 15 feet high. These areas provide cover and are difficult terrain. A Large or smaller creature must make a DC 14 Athletics check to move across an ingot pile.

Log Piles: Densewood logs and deadfall are piled to a height of 20 feet. These areas provide cover and are difficult terrain. A Large or smaller creature must make a DC 22 Athletics check to move over a log pile. A Large or larger creature moving across a log pile must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or unleash an avalanche of logs in a burst 2, dealing 2d10 damage to itself and any Large or smaller creature in the area. The area filled by fallen logs becomes difficult terrain for Large or smaller creatures.



G3: Fire and Forge

Encounter Level 19 (12,400 XP)

Setup

2 fire giant forgecallers (F)
3 fire giant ironmongers (I)
12 fire giant serfs (S)

The githyanki docks are built around numerous foundries where the steel frames of astral warships are forged, welded, and repaired.

Whenever the PCs make their first foray toward this area (whether initially from area G1 or after Encounter G2), they are interrupted by a pair of giants running for the dock gate (area G5).

When the PCs first approach this area, read:

A shout from the chamber beyond precedes pounding footsteps as two fire giants suddenly appear in the passageway. In their arms, each carries a pile of what look like smoldering steel spheres.

Two fire giant serfs are carrying slag missiles (thin spheres of iron holding a core of molten slag) to the battle outside. Unless the PCs draw attention to themselves, they can easily pull back into area C1 or C2 as the giants turn up the third leg of the passageway and disappear from sight. Go to Encounter C5 (the "Following the Giants" sidebar) if the PCs decide to pursue.

If the PCs took on the giants in Encounter G2 before entering this area, the fire giants here had a 50 percent chance to notice the fight over the noise of the foundry. If no noise was heard, the giants are all hard at work and distracted in the positions indicated on the tactical map. If the giants heard combat, the forgecallers and ironmongers have moved out of sight to the right, around the corner from the door. Do not place their miniatures (noted by ghosted tags on the tactical map) unless they are spotted or until they attack.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

Iron and brass ingots are piled high across this chamber, with piles of deadfall and kiln-fired charcoal standing close by the feeder doors of a half-dozen massive forges. The heat of this foundry is crippling even from a distance, but the workers here seem not to notice—some dozen fire giants work furiously at massive anvils. The ship castings they work with are being systematically destroyed—cut to chunks and hot-hammered into the spheres you saw the others carrying. These appear to be some sort of weapon destined for the fight outside.

Perception Check, if the forgecallers and ironmongers are in hiding.

DC 22: *Although twelve fire giants labor hard within the foundry, three central anvils and a forge are conspicuously untended.*

If the PCs fail the Perception check or otherwise blunder into the chamber, any giants in hiding gain surprise.

12 Fire Giant Serfs (S)	Level 16 Soldier Minion
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 350 each
Initiative +11	**Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27	
Resist 15 fire	
Speed 7	
⊕ **Fiery Forge Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**	
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 3 damage plus 3 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the fire giant's next turn.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Deep Speech, Giant
Skills Endurance +19	
Str 23 (+15)	**Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)
Con 22 (+15)	**Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
Equipment forge hammer	

2 Fire Giant Forgecallers (F)	Level 18 Artillery
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 2,000 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +17	
HP 136; **Bloodied** 68	
AC 32; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30	
Resist 15 fire	
Speed 8	
⊕ **Smoldering Mace** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d10 fire damage.	
↗ **Fire Pillar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**	
Ranged 20; +21 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 3 fire damage.	
✲ **Flame Burst** (standard; recharge 6) ✦ **Fire**	
Area burst 2 within 10; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 3 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant	
Skills Intimidate +14	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 15 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+12)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)	
Equipment dragonhide armor, mace	

3 Fire Giant Ironmongers (I)	Level 16 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 1,400 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +9	
HP 156; **Bloodied** 78	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27	
Resist 15 fire	
Speed 7	
⊕ **Searing Forge Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage plus 2d8 fire damage, and the target is marked until the end of the fire giant's next turn.	
↗ **Slag Missile** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 10; +21 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
✧ **Hammer Blast** (standard; requires forge hammer; encounter) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
Close blast 2; +21 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage plus 2d8 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the fire giant's next turn.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, Giant	
Skills Endurance +19	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)	
Equipment forge hammer, forge apron	

Tactics

The forgecallers focus *smoldering mace* attacks on defenders or strikers, using their reach to stay out of harm's way. If no melee target presents itself, a forgecaller creates a *fire pillar* or *flameburst* to strike distant foes.

The ironmongers open combat with a *hammer blast*, then focus *searing forge hammer* attacks on dazed foes. If the PCs fall back, the giants fill steel spheres with molten metal to launch *slag missile* attacks.

The fire giant serfs wade into combat with their *fiery forge hammers*, flanking for combat advantage and focusing on dazed targets.

Development

If the PCs bypass this encounter to go directly to the repair dock, the creatures here come to the aid of the githyanki in Encounter G4. See the "Reinforcements" sidebar in that encounter for more information.

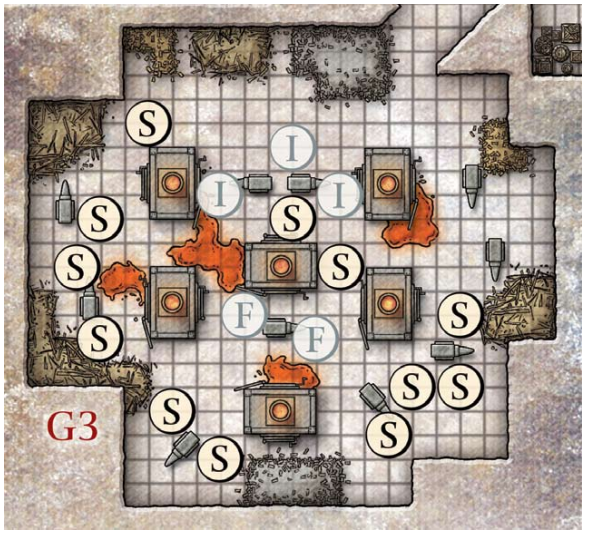
Features of the Area

Illumination: The fires of the forges fill this area with bright light.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

Heat Hazard: The blistering air of the foundry is breathable by the PCs. However, a creature that begins its turn adjacent to a forge takes 1d10 fire damage. A creature that comes into contact with a forge takes 2d10 fire damage.

Anvils: These enormous steel anvils stand 10 feet high and provide cover. A creature can climb to the top of an anvil with a DC 13 Athletics check.



Burning Slag: Pools of molten slag overflowing from the forges are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of burning slag takes 2d10 fire damage.

Ingot Piles: Piles of 2-foot-long iron or brass ingots rise 15 feet high. These areas provide cover and are difficult terrain. A Large or smaller creature must make a DC 14 Athletics check to move across an ingot pile.

Wood and Charcoal: Deadfall and kiln-fired charcoal are piled to a height of 15 feet. These areas provide cover and are difficult terrain. It takes a DC 14 Athletics check to move over a pile of wood and charcoal.

G5: Dock Gate

Encounter Level 19 (12,600 XP; see the "Reinforcements" sidebar)

Setup

4 fomorian guards (G)
8 githyanki gish crusaders (C)
2 githyanki gish warmasters (W)

Beyond the foundry and the loading zone, the central repair docks are sealed off behind secure magical wards. After breaking into this area and facing off against githyanki guards and their giant allies, the PCs must seal the dock again to prevent reinforcements from arriving.

As the PCs approach through the empty warehouse, read:

Ahead, a massive doorway opens up, and a faint shimmering marks the field of a magical force ward. From beyond, a harsh voice shouts out.

Perception Check, for a PC who understands Deep Speech

DC 22: *A githyanki screams in anger: "Keep formation! Space yourselves out, you misshapen lumps, or you can join your worthless kin in the fight outside!"*

A PC can safely peer around the corner to see what lies beyond the doorways.

When the PCs look into this area, read:

Close to you, a glowing panel set into the stone wall pulses in time with the force field set within the doorway ahead. This magical gate is one of three sets of warded doorways adjacent at one end of a huge hangar. Four fomorians stand watch near the four corners of the hangar, and a pack of githyanki circles around them as they watch the doors.

In a circular open dock at the opposite end, five astral craft hang suspended in a nest of steel cables. However, these are all smaller strike ships, not the flagship you seek.

The placement of the githyanki guards on the tactical map represents their position when the PCs first look in. Each round that the PCs spend watching, the warmasters and the gish crusaders move 6 squares counterclockwise. Swayed by the overheard threats of one of the warmasters, the fomorians stand alert where indicated.

Following the Giants

When the PCs see the fire giants move for this area (see Encounter G1), they might elect to follow, attempting to make their entrance when the gate is opened. Alternatively, as long as the giants in area G2 or G3 remain unaware of the PCs' presence in the dock, four more giants (either fire giant serfs or fomorian guards) exit the complex every 2d6 rounds. The distracted giants are not likely to notice the PCs if they hide within the warehouse. When the warded door is opened, the PCs have 2 rounds to pass through before it is closed again. The giants going through the door join the combat in this area, in addition to the troops noted in the "Reinforcements" sidebar.

Getting In

As long as the PCs do not step fully into the open or approach with a light source, they need not make Stealth checks to avoid being seen by the guards while outside this area. Moving adjacent to the magic control panel for either of the area G4 doors puts a PC in view of the guards unless he or she is invisible. However, by timing his or her attempts to disable the gate with the guards' movement, the PC has a chance to avoid detection. It takes three DC 22 Thievery or Arcana checks (each a standard action) to disable the wards, simultaneously opening all three gates. However, the character making the check must also make a DC 22 Stealth check as a minor action each time or be seen by those within the hanger.

The guards here immediately spot any PCs openly approaching the gate. If alerted by the PCs' attempts to unlock the gate, the fomorians move in to flank both gates before they can be opened, while the githyanki pull back behind the cover of scrap piles and crates.

4 Fomorian Guards (G)		**Level 17 Minion Soldier**
Huge fey humanoid (giant)		**XP 400 each**
Initiative +16	**Senses** Perception +13; truesight 6	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 33; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28		
Speed 8		
⊕ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
Reach 4; +22 vs. AC; 8 damage (13 damage against immobilized targets), and the target is marked until the end of the fomorian guard's next turn.		
↗ **Evil Eye** (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Ranged 5; +20 vs. Will; the target is immobilized until the end of the fomorian guard's turn.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Deep Speech, Elven	
Str 24 (+15)	**Dex** 22 (+14)	**Wis** 20 (+13)
Con 20 (+13)	**Int** 11 (+8)	**Cha** 15 (+10)
Equipment chainmail, halberd		

8 Githyanki (C) Level 17 Minion Skirmisher
Gish Crusaders
Medium natural humanoid XP 400 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +15
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *astral stride*

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+21 vs. AC; 10 psychic damage.

Astral Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 10 psychic damage.

Astral Stride (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The githyanki gish crusader teleports 6 squares and gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 20 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 14 (+10) **Cha** 18 (+12)
Equipment chainmail, silver longsword

Tactics

The fomorian guards wade into melee, using *evil eye* against the most heavily armored PCs and focusing halberd attacks on immobilized opponents. They use their reach to stay out of danger. These guards do not fight in isolation, and they raise the alarm as soon as the threat posed by the PCs becomes clear. See the "Reinforcements" sidebar.

The gish crusaders fight in pairs, flanking for combat advantage with *silver longsword* attacks, or making *astral bolt* attacks against PCs staying out of melee.

Each gish warmaster stays back in the first round to strike with *astral storm*, then wades in against defenders and strikers with *double attack*. Against two or more PCs adjacent to each other, a warmaster uses *astral lightning*, spending its action point to keep up its *double attack* the first time.

2 Githyanki (W) Level 17 Elite Skirmisher
Gish Warmasters
Medium natural humanoid XP 3,200 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +17
HP 330; **Bloodied** 165
AC 33; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 30
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects)
Speed 5; see also *astral stride*
Action Points 1

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Astral Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
Ranged 5; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 radiant damage.

Double Attack (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
The githyanki gish warmaster makes two silver longsword attacks. If it hits two different targets, each target takes an additional 1d8 psychic damage.

Astral Storm (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Radiant**
The githyanki gish warmaster makes four attacks, no more than two of them against a single target: ranged 5; +20 vs. **Fortitude**; 3d8 + 6 psychic and radiant damage.

Astral Lightning (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Lightning**
Area burst 1 within 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 6 lightning damage.

Astral Stride (move; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
The githyanki gish warmaster teleports 6 squares and gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic
Skills Arcana +17
Str 19 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+12)
Con 21 (+13) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment chainmail, silver longsword

Dock Gate Level 16
Skill Challenge XP 1,400

Entering the repair dock required you to open all three gates into the area. Now you must seal them again, and quickly.

The three dock gates feature control panels on the inside of the hanger similar to those seen on the outside. As long as the gates remain open, the PCs find themselves under renewed assault. Each skill check in this challenge requires a standard action.

Complexity
1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
Arcana, Athletics, Thievery

Victory
The PCs successfully override the magical gate controls, sealing all three gates and preventing them from being opened again.

Defeat
The PCs damage the gates' arcane mechanism enough to permanently shut them, but a blast of arcane power causes all creatures within 5 squares of any doorway to lose a healing surge. In addition, a last wave of eight gish crusaders comes through before the gates are sealed (see the "Reinforcements" sidebar).

Special
If the PCs choose to ignore this skill challenge and simply move for the next encounter, this adventure quickly takes a turn for the worse. Githyanki reinforcements responding to the alarm inside the complex arrive in the hundreds within 5 rounds, pursuing the PCs into area G6 and following in strike ships if they take to the air. This is a fight the party cannot possibly win, but the githyanki are savvy enough to want to keep at least some of these powerful PCs alive for questioning.
This turn of events grants the Coalition forces outside an easier victory as troops are drawn off to pursue the party. The PCs' allies in the Coalition will eventually come to their rescue, but the ultimate resolution of the adventure will be up to you.

Arcana
DC 25 (1 success or failure, maximum 2 successes)
The PC taps into the magic within one of the gates, gaining control of its flow.

Athletics
DC 20 (1 success or failure, maximum 1 success)
With brute force, the PC unlocks the inhibitors that control the flow of arcane power to the gates.

Thievery
DC 25 (1 success or failure, maximum 2 successes)
Working at the control panel, the PC is able to override part of the mechanism controlling the gates.

Reinforcements

The skill challenge to seal the doors is essential to the PCs' success in this part of the adventure. However, the longer they take to do so, the greater the threat from the shipyard's defenders.

In round 3, the githyanki realize the seriousness of the threat posed by the PCs. In response to screaming orders from a gish warmaster, a gish crusader forgoes its attack for 1 round to move for one of the gate control panels, using it to sound a shrill alarm.

Starting in round 5 and every other round thereafter, new defenders appear at the doorway at the top of the map—four githyanki corsair cutters (see Encounter G6), one githyanki reaver (Encounter G1), or four fomorian guards. Choose the reinforcements or roll randomly. These new defenders focus their attacks on the closest foes—most likely those PCs working at the doors as part of the skill challenge.

If the PCs bypassed either Encounter G2 or G3, this encounter gets significantly more deadly. In addition to the reinforcements noted above, the nonminion fire giants from G3 enter the fray here in round 7 in response to the alarm. The eldritch giants from Encounter G2 enter this encounter in round 9.

Award the PCs additional experience for any reinforcements they kill.

Once the skill challenge is completed, no further reinforcements arrive (aside from those noted under "Defeat"). The PCs see more githyanki and giants racing up to the gates, but with the wards reactivated and under the party's control, these additional reinforcements can find no way in.

Development

Even if the PCs dispense with this encounter quickly, the fight does not go unnoticed.

When the PCs have time to regroup after the fight, or if a character can see in the direction of area G6, read:

The echo of footsteps rings out along the landing that rises adjacent to the hanger. Thirty feet above, a dozen githyanki warriors watch you coldly.

These githyanki are Kada'ne's personal guard. Knowing that the alarm has been raised, they hold back to watch over *Cev'ren*, waiting for the PCs to come to them.

Features of the Area

Illumination: This area is infused with bright light.

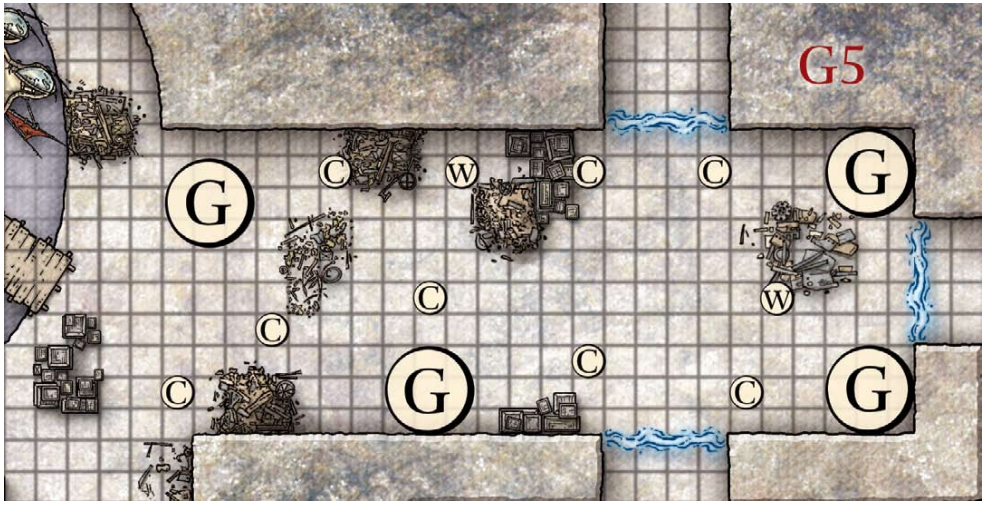
Warded Door: The open doorways are filled with a shimmering force field when the door wards are active. No creature, object, or power can pass through a warded door in either direction.

Crates: These squares are difficult terrain. These piles of mesh steel crates stand 15 feet high and provide cover. They can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

The steel mesh sides of these empty crates provide convenient handholds. A creature with two hands free can push one of the 3-foot-high crates in front of it at normal speed (though it cannot run). This provides cover while moving, but the creature must then draw its weapons or retrieve stowed items when it stops moving.

Scrap: These areas of cast-off steel fragments, cables, and other detritus are difficult terrain. A creature that runs, charges, or makes a double move through an area of scrap must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Scrap Piles: A 5-foot-high scrap pile provides cover and is difficult terrain. It takes a DC 10 Athletics check to move over a scrap pile.



G6: Boarding Party

Encounter Level 18 (11,600 XP)

Setup

8 githyanki corsair cutters (C)
1 githyanki corsair shipmaster (S)
1 githyanki gish warmaster (W)
8 githyanki psychic archers (P)

The PCs will likely take a stealthy approach when ascending the high catwalk, but the githyanki have already fallen back to more defensible positions.

When the PCs can see the upper landing, read:

The approach to the upper landing is undefended, and it yields up the sight of another repair dock and the first glimpse of your goal. The sleek flagship Cev'ren *sits within a taut lattice of mooring lines, pulsing white light bathing it where the roof dome above the dock has been drawn back to reveal open air and the astral gate above. A dozen githyanki are in motion across the decks of the man-of-war, but the force between you and them is the more immediate concern—the githyanki you saw before have fallen back behind makeshift barricades.*

Perception Check

DC 13: *The figures on the flagship are led by a hulking githyanki in golden plate armor, his voice a dark howl as he shouts orders.*

Insight or Perception Check

DC 20: *The githyanki swarming over the* Cev'ren *are a mix of guards and flight crew. Though still obviously under repair, the astral man-of-war is preparing to launch.*

Tactics

The githyanki are set to defend *Cev'ren* against attack, and they take advantage of their defensive cover for as long as possible. The psychic archers fire their *psychic shots* as soon as the PCs appear on the landing (or attempt to go over it).

The corsair shipmaster moves to fight any PC attempting to push through the barricade. The corsair cutters attack between gaps in the barricade, targeting PCs dazed by the psychic archers' attacks for extra damage from combat advantage.

The warmaster makes *astral storm* and *astral lightning* attacks against heavily armored PCs.

When the PCs are at or over the barricade, the githyanki's tactics change. The warmaster enters the fray, making double attacks against a single target in the front ranks. It uses its action point when a foe is first bloodied, making two double attacks in the hope of dropping it.

8 Githyanki (C) Corsair Cutters	Level 17 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400 each
Initiative +16	**Senses** Perception +13
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*	
⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+22 vs. AC; 10 damage.	
Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)	
The githyanki corsair cutter flies 5 squares.	
Combat Advantage	
A githyanki corsair cutter deals 3 extra damage on melee attacks against any target that is granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 21 (+13)	**Dex** 23 (+14) **Wis** 21 (+13)
Con 16 (+11)	**Int** 17 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Equipment: leather armor, light shield, silver longsword	

The psychic archers fall back to continue firing, targeting PCs moving for the ships.

The corsair shipmaster and the corsair cutters use *telekinetic leap* and *telekinetic jump* to fly over the advancing PCs and attack from behind. The shipmaster uses *blade dance* against a lightly armored PC, then shifts to flank with a corsair cutter for combat advantage. The cutters flank in groups of two, constantly regrouping as they are cut down.

Githyanki Corsair (S) Shipmaster	Level 19 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,400
Initiative +18	**Senses** Perception +15
HP 179; **Bloodied** 89	
AC 33; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 31	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*	
⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+24 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, and if the githyanki corsair shipmaster has combat advantage against the target, it can shift 3 squares.	
⸸ **Blade Dance** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+24 vs. AC; 3d8 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the githyanki corsair shipmaster's next turn. *Effect:* The shipmaster can shift up to 3 squares before or after making this attack.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki corsair shipmaster or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.	
Combat Advantage	
A githyanki corsair shipmaster deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target that is granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +21, Insight +20	
Str 22 (+15)	**Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 22 (+15)
Con 19 (+13)	**Int** 21 (+14) **Cha** 17 (+12)
Equipment: leather armor, light shield, silver longsword	

Githyanki (W) Gish Warmaster	Level 17 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 3,200

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +17
HP 330; **Bloodied** 165
AC 33; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 30
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects)
Speed 5; see also *astral stride*
Action Points 1

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Astral Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
Ranged 5; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 radiant damage.

Double Attack (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
The githyanki gish warmaster makes two silver longsword attacks. If it hits two different targets, each target takes an additional 1d8 psychic damage.

Astral Storm (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic, Radiant**
The githyanki gish warmaster makes four attacks, no more than two of them against a single target: ranged 5; +20 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 psychic and radiant damage.

Astral Lightning (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Lightning**
Area burst 1 within 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 6 lightning damage.

Astral Stride (move; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
The githyanki gish warmaster teleports 6 squares and gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic
Skills Arcana +17

Str 19 (+12)	**Dex** 18 (+12)	**Wis** 18 (+12)
Con 21 (+13)	**Int** 24 (+15)	**Cha** 21 (+13)

Equipment chainmail, silver longsword

Cev'ren's Escape

The guards here fight to the death to prevent the PCs from reaching *Cev'ren*. When six or fewer githyanki remain standing, or if the PCs decide to simply bypass these defenders to get to the dock, the flagship breaks its moorings and takes to the air.

With a shriek of rending steel, the astral man-of-war lurches up within its nest of mooring lines. As the githyanki on the decks hack through the last of these, the ship is swept up as if lifted by a mighty wave. The last of the githyanki crew pull themselves on as Cev'ren lifts slowly to the pulsing white sky.

Astral craft function only in the mystical medium of the Astral Sea, but the presence of the astral gate automatically lifts *Cev'ren* and the smaller strike ships from their moorings.

8 Githyanki (P) Psychic Archers	Level 16 Minion Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 350 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic jump*

Silver Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+23 vs. AC; 6 damage.

Psychic Shot (standard; requires longbow; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +21 vs. Will; 8 psychic damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki psychic archer flies 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Str 18 (+12)	**Dex** 18 (+12)	**Wis** 17 (+11)
Con 21 (+13)	**Int** 24 (+15)	**Cha** 21 (+13)

Equipment leather armor, silver dagger, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

The PCs are welcome to attack *Cev'ren* if they wish. See Encounter G7 for information on attacking the astral man-of-war, and keep track of how much damage the PCs deal, since it counts toward success in the skill challenge in that encounter.

Whether the fight is finished or not, a PC that gets closer to the second repair dock sees the astral strike ship left behind.

Bobbing in the astral man-of-war's magical wake, a smaller armored strike ship strains at its mooring lines.

The name "Iliyoru" is emblazoned across the strike ship's hull. A PC who understands Deep Speech translates the name as "White Blade."

A PC who saw *Cev'ren* depart knows that cutting the strike ship's lines is enough to start its ascent. With a DC 22 Arcana check, a PC knows that the smaller strike ship is faster than the man-of-war if it can be properly controlled.

When the PCs are ready to board *Iliyoru*, read:

The strike ship is undefended, and whatever crew might have been here was either commandeered by Kada'ne or mustered for the battle outside the repair dock. Iliyoru tugs at the lines that hold her fast, drawn by the swirling essence of the astral gate high above.

Cutting the ship free of its moorings takes only 1 round. *Iliyoru* immediately begins to climb, but the PCs must master the astral craft's complex controls to mount an effective pursuit of the fleeing *Cev'ren*. Go to Encounter G7 on the next page.

Ships of the Line

Iliyoru is an astral strike ship, similar in design to an astral skiff (*Manual of the Planes*™ page 159) but larger and built for war. *Cev'ren* is a massive astral man-of-war and the flagship of the githyanki fleet—a planar warship on the scale of a seafaring war galleon. Both ships feature hulls reinforced with protective magic and open decks that can be sealed behind protective plates for long-distance travel across the Astral Sea. Both craft possess spell turrets and force ballistas for use in ship-to-ship combat. See Encounter G7 for more information.

Features of the Area

Illumination: This area is infused with bright light.

Catwalk: This shaky catwalk rises alongside the landing of the dock. The catwalk can be moved along normally, but a Medium or smaller creature that makes a melee attack while in a square on the edge of the catwalk must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or stumble and fall over the edge.

Ladders: These rough mesh ladders connect the lower level with the landing. It takes a move action and a DC 15 Athletics check to climb 10 feet up a ladder.

Gantry: Each of these gantry towers rises 20 feet above the catwalk or the landing, and features a crane sling arm for raising cargo from below. A gantry tower provides cover and can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check. A creature engaged in combat on the top of a tower must make a DC 22 Acrobatics check or fall.

The sling arm cable hanging from the end of a gantry arm can be jumped to from a nearby catwalk with an Athletics check as normal. (A sling arm that has been moved over a catwalk can be grabbed.) A character who makes the jump snags the cable with a DC 14 Acrobatics check. On a failed check, the character falls.

A creature that grabs a cable pulls the gantry arm 45 degrees in the direction of the creature's movement, and can swing out on the cable in the same direction. The creature can then jump from the cable to any nearby catwalk by making an Acrobatics check. Use the DC for an Athletics check to jump the distance from the gantry to the catwalk, but treat the creature as if it has a running start.

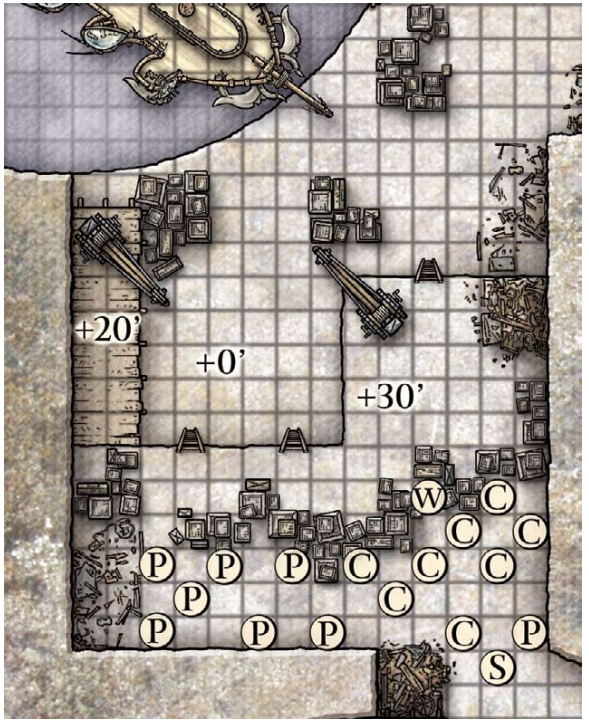
Makeshift Barricade: The githyanki have assembled the mesh steel crates littering this area into barricades 6 feet high. The barricades are difficult terrain and provide superior cover. An unstable barricade can be climbed over with a DC 15 Athletics check, vaulted over with a DC 15 Acrobatics check, or pushed through with a DC 20 Athletics check. Pushing a barricade slides its crates and any creature behind those crates 2 squares.

Crates: These squares are difficult terrain. These piles of mesh steel crates stand 15 feet high and provide cover. They can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

The steel mesh sides of these empty crates provide convenient handholds. A creature with two hands free can push one of the 3-foot-high crates in front of it at normal speed (though it cannot run). This provides cover while moving, but the creature must then draw its weapons or retrieve stowed items when it stops moving.

Scrap: These areas of cast-off steel fragments, cables, and other detritus are difficult terrain. A creature that runs, charges, or makes a double move through an area of scrap must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Scrap Pile: A 5-foot-high scrap pile provides cover and is difficult terrain. It takes a DC 10 Athletics check to move over a scrap pile.



G7: Iliyoru's Flight

Encounter Level 18 (11,200 XP)

Admiral Kada'ne is on board the flagship *Cev'ren* as it lifts off toward the astral gate at the core of Garaitha's Anvil. The PCs have seized the astral strike ship Iliyoru and are giving chase. This encounter is not a straightforward combat challenge. Rather, the PCs must take control of *Iliyoru* even as they utilize her armaments and their own powers to bring *Cev'ren* to a halt. However, as they do so, the PCs come under attack from the man-of-war and from githyanki forces battling their Coalition allies.

Explain the controls of *Iliyoru* to the players (see the "Fight in the Skies" sidebar) as the PCs settle in on the strike ship. Then give the players an overview of the skill challenge and let the chase begin.

Iliyoru's Flight Skill Challenge — **Level 18 XP 8,000**

Cev'ren is rising quickly above Iliyoru, *bound for the astral gate and a chance to flee the conflagration below.*

Cutting *Iliyoru* free of its moorings causes it to automatically rise up toward the astral gate high above the Garaitha docks. However, only by gaining control of the ship do the PCs have a chance to catch up to Kada'ne's flagship.

Complexity

4 (requires 10 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills

Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Thievery.

Other Skills

Acrobatics, Perception.

Special

PCs not crewing the ship or making checks in the skill challenge can make attacks against *Cev'ren* in an attempt to cripple the flagship. Damage dealt to *Cev'ren* counts toward success in the skill challenge. Damage dealt to Iliyoru does not count toward failure in the skill challenge, but can hinder the ship's speed. See the "Fight in the Skies" and "Roll Out the Guns" sidebars for more information.

If the PCs close the distance between *Iliyoru* and *Cev'ren* to 0 squares, or if *Cev'ren*'s speed is reduced to 0 by damage, they gain an automatic victory in the skill challenge. If Iliyoru's speed is reduced to 0 by damage, the PCs gain an automatic defeat in the challenge.

Victory

The PCs earn a victory in this skill challenge in two stages. When they achieve 5 successes, they gain full control of *Iliyoru*. This allows the strike ship to travel at its maximum speed of 12 squares (until brought under control, Iliyoru travels at a speed of 10 squares).

Subsequent checks in the challenge focus on safely bringing the smaller ship to within boarding range of *Cev'ren*. With an overall victory in the challenge (whether attained by successful skill checks or by attacks against *Cev'ren*), the PCs can successfully fire the grappling lines that lock the man-of-war and the strike ship together.

Defeat

Whether or not they gain initial control of *Iliyoru*, the PCs cannot successfully lock to *Cev'ren*. Instead, the smaller Iliyoru goes into an out-of-control spiral that brings it within range of the flagship's grapples. (If the PCs fail the skill challenge while *Cev'ren* is still well out of range, Kada'ne sees them scuttle their ship and descends to seize it.) Each PC on the strike ship takes 2d10 damage and loses 1 healing surge.

Acrobatics

DC 13 (0 successes or failures) With a successful check (a free action), the PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his or her next primary skill check in the challenge or a +2 circumstance bonus to damage on his or her next attack made against *Cev'ren* (see the "Fight in the Skies" and "Roll Out the Guns" sidebars). On a failed check, the PC takes a -2 penalty to his or her next primary check or damage roll.

Taking control of *Iliyoru* is made more difficult by the ship's chaotic movement as the PCs try to avoid attack while climbing toward the astral gate.

Acrobatics

DC 20 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes) Only the PC piloting *Iliyoru* can make this check. In addition to earning a success in the skill challenge, a successful check grants *Iliyoru* a +10 bonus to AC and Reflex until the beginning of the pilot's next turn.

By constantly changing up the smaller strike ship's course as it climbs, the PC makes Iliyoru a more difficult target for the whitewings and the gunners on *Cev'ren*.

Arcana

DC 25 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

Drawing on his or her understanding of magic devices, the PC works out the complex operation of the strike ship's controls.

Athletics

DC 20 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

Getting control of Iliyoru relies on traditional sailing skill as much as magical aptitude. With a successful check, the PC properly sets the strike ship's rigging to help control its erratic course upward.

Perception

DC 13 (0 successes or failures)

With a successful Perception check (a free action), the PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his or her next check in the challenge or a +2 circumstance bonus to damage on his or her next attack made against *Cev'ren* (see the "Fight in the Skies" and "Roll Out the Guns" sidebars). On a failed check, the PC takes a -2 penalty to his or her next primary check or damage roll.

The shifting maelstrom of the astral gate flares wildly overhead as Iliyoru and *Cev'ren* arc around each other, making it hard to accurately judge distance and direction as the ships close.

Thievery

DC 25 (1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

The complex controls of *Iliyoru* can be subtly coerced into responding to the PC's direction.

After the PCs have made their first success or failure in the skill challenge, read:

Iliyoru pitches as you try to bring her under control, swinging wide over the shipyard below. The githyanki and the Coalition forces are still locked in combat, neither side giving ground in the ongoing assault. Then suddenly, a group of white shapes peel away from a skirmish with the Coalition's griffon riders. Eight white reptilian creatures wing their way up and toward Iliyoru *with a shriek, their githyanki riders spurring them on.*

Setup

8 githyanki corsair cutters on astral whitewings

The whitewings and their riders approach from below *Iliyoru*, but these creatures have speed enough to easily catch up to the strike ship with double moves. This encounter has no tactical map, but use the plan of *Iliyoru* from Encounter G8 to map the whitewings' movement around the ship.

The whitewings and their riders start out spaced around one side of the strike ship. As the fight progresses, keep track of *Iliyoru's* speed as compared to the whitewings'. A whitewing uses most of its move to keep up with *Iliyoru* (either 10 or 12 squares), with its additional movement used to adjust its position relative to the ship. (The proximity of the astral gate grants the whitewing the increased fly speed for its astral wings power.)

New Creature: Astral Whitewing

These highly intelligent reptilian flyers are native to the Astral Sea, and are raised and trained by the githyanki as flying mounts. A whitewing seats one rider in a specially made saddle, and it can be controlled by reins or voice command. These creatures have a wingspan of nearly 30 feet, and they are equally at home in the skies of the planes as the Astral Sea.

Native wild whitewings are found only in the Astral Sea, and they are known for their predatory pack attacks on travelers in that realm. Whitewings trained as mounts by the githyanki are sometimes lost on scout missions, and they can be found wandering wild in the remote mountainous regions of the world and the Feywild.

Fight in the Skies

When it leaves the dock, Iliyoru starts out 40 squares beneath the climbing *Cev'ren*. The strike ship initially travels at a speed of 10 squares. When brought under control (5 successes in the skill challenge), it travels at a speed of 12 squares. The flagship *Cev'ren* has a speed of 8 squares. Because of the turbulence created by the astral gate, neither craft can make a double move in this encounter.

The lift granted by the astral gate means that it takes only three PCs to control *Iliyoru*—one pilot and two crew. (A ship of this size normally requires a crew of three or more.) For each missing crew member, the ship's speed is reduced by 2 squares.

The PC who pilots the strike ship must do so with a standard action and a move action each round. The PCs crewing *Iliyoru* must use a standard action each round to do so. Because those three PCs are actively working the strike ship's controls, they can make primary skill checks in the skill challenge as minor actions. All other characters make primary skill checks in the challenge as standard actions.

Initially, three PCs need to fly the ship and make checks in the skill challenge, with other PCs either undertaking the skill challenge or attacking *Cev'ren* in an attempt to slow it down (see the "Run Out the Guns" sidebar). However, a PC can forgo crewing the ship to join in the attack as long as *Iliyoru's* reduced speed matches *Cev'ren*'s, preventing the flagship from getting out of range.

Keep track of the distance between the two ships from round to round, and of the change in speed of either craft as it takes damage. For every 50 damage either astral craft takes, its speed is reduced by 2 squares. At fly speed 0, a ship floats out of control toward the astral gate, allowing the other ship to catch it. (The PCs can continue to attack *Cev'ren* even after its speed has been reduced to 0. However, a ship at 0 hit points is not destroyed, but simply disabled.)

Each warship is equipped with grappling lines that can be fired by the pilot. *Iliyoru* engages its grapples when the PCs have achieved a victory in the skill challenge. If the party suffers a defeat in the challenge, *Cev'ren* instead fires its grapples against the strike ship.

The vehicle rules above have been adapted from *Adventurer's Vault*™. You can use that supplement if you want to play out a more complex chase between Iliyoru and *Cev'ren*.

Tactics

The whitewings swarm *Iliyoru*, using their astral jaunt or flyby attack to get into position for tail slam attacks against the strike ship. The githyanki corsair cutters do not attack, since they know they cannot deal any damage against *Iliyoru's* magically enhanced defenses.

As the whitewings and their riders move around the strike ship, they do so at different altitudes relative to each other. However, because diagonals on the battle grid are equivalent to horizontal or vertical distances, two githyanki four squares apart on the battle grid remain 4 squares apart at different heights for the purpose of targeting them both with an area attack.

See the "Fight in the Skies" and "Run Out the Guns" sidebars for more information on the combat with the whitewings and their riders.

8 Astral Whitewings	Level 15 Skirmisher
Large immortal beast (reptile)	XP 1,200* each

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +18; low-light vision
HP 146; **Bloodied** 73
AC 30; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover); see also *astral wings*

⊕ **Tail Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.

↓ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)
The astral whitewing moves its fly speed and makes one tail slam attack at any point during that movement. The whitewing does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

↷ **Stunning Shriek** (standard; at-will)
Ranged 5; the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Astral Jaunt (move action; must be mounted by a friendly githyanki rider; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Mount, Teleportation**
The astral whitewing and its rider teleport a distance equal to the whitewing's fly speed.

Astral Wings
While in the Astral Sea, the whitewing's fly speed increases to 12 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 22 (+13)	**Dex** 24 (+14)	**Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 18 (+11)	**Int** 8 (+6)	**Cha** 16 (+10)

* A whitewing in this encounter flees if its corsair cutter rider is killed, earning XP only for the minion.

RUN OUT THE GUNS

Four of the six turrets on Iliyoru are designed to allow spellcasters to channel magical attacks against other ships and airborne combatants. A character in a spell turret can use the turret to direct any nonweapon ranged or area arcane or divine attack power.

A character directing a power through a spell turret uses his or her own attack modifier and deals damage as normal. However, a power directed through a spell turret cannot be used with an implement.

The magic of a spell turret doubles the range of arcane and divine powers, and allows powers to target inanimate objects even if they normally cannot do so. Characters attacking airborne creatures through a spell turret can make use of any of a power's effects. Powers that create effects in addition to hit point damage can be used against a ship, but the ship ignores such effects (including ongoing damage).

Attacks that deal damage throughout an area (typically attacks that target all creatures in a burst) strike more than 1 square when used against a ship, dealing additional damage as follows: burst 1 or 2, 2 damage; burst 3 or 4, 3 damage; burst 5 or larger, 5 damage. Attacks that can target multiple characters function only as a single attack when directed through a spell turret.

Characters who do not have arcane or divine powers can make use of two force ballista turrets on the strike ship.

Force Ballista: +15 vs. AC; ranged 40; 3d10 force damage. Each force ballista has 10 bolts and is operated by a single character. Firing is a standard action. Activating the magical bolt loader is a minor action.

Each round that the astral ships are in the air, the crew of *Cev'ren* launch four force ballista attacks against the pursuing *Iliyoru*, using the attack and damage modifiers above. (Kada'ne is the only githyanki on *Cev'ren* with arcane powers, but he is too busy giving orders to make use of the flagship's spell turrets.)

Attacks made with the spell turrets and force ballistas of either ship target only the other craft or creatures in the air. These attacks cannot target a character on a ship.

Cev'ren: HP 800; AC 8; Fortitude 20, Reflex 12; resist 10 all damage; speed 8.

Iliyoru: HP 500; AC 6; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15; resist 10 all damage; speed 10 (at the beginning of the skill challenge) or 12 (after 5 victories in the challenge).

The vehicle rules above have been adapted from *Adventurer's Vault*. You can use that supplement if you want to play out a more complex chase between *Iliyoru* and *Cev'ren*.

8 Githyanki Corsair Cutters	Level 17 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400 each
Initiative +16	**Senses** Perception +12
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*	
⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+22 vs. AC; 10 damage.	
Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)	
The githyanki corsair cutter flies 5 squares.	
Combat Advantage	
A githyanki corsair cutter deals 3 extra damage on melee attacks against any target that is granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 21 (+13)	**Dex** 23 (+14) **Wis** 21 (+13)
Con 16 (+11)	**Int** 17 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Equipment: leather armor, light shield, silver longsword	

Development

At the completion of the skill challenge, *Cev'ren* is locked to Iliyoru and ready to be boarded. If the PCs suffered a defeat in the skill challenge and were seized by *Cev'ren*, paraphrase the following accordingly.

The grappling controls are set and punched, and with a shriek of steel, a dozen silver cables lance out from Iliyoru to sink into Cev'ren's hull. Like raptors caught in a death spiral, the two ships are pulled toward each other even as their now-connected momentum causes them to spin out of control. The lightning-streaked maelstrom of the astral gate looms above you.

The PCs have no chance for a short rest. Go to the next page for the final encounter and the showdown with Kada'ne's forces.

Experience

The astral whitewings are a much more potent threat than their minion masters in terms of their hit points and attacks. However, if its rider is slain, a whitewing in this encounter immediately flees the battle. Because this encounter treats the whitewings and their riders as a single creature with minion hit points, XP is awarded only for the corsair cutters.

On the off chance that the PCs kill one of the whitewings while targeting its rider, award them additional experience as appropriate.

G8: Kada'ne's Stand

Encounter Level 21 (19,600 XP)

Setup

Admiral Kada'ne, githyanki gish overlord (O)
6 githyanki blademasters (B)
6 githyanki corsair cutters (C)
8 githyanki psychic archers (P)

On board the githyanki flagship *Cev'ren*, the PCs face off against Admiral Kada'ne and his forces in a final showdown.

As *Cev'ren* and *Iliyoru* come together, read:

Even as Iliyoru *and the larger* Cev'ren *come together with a shuddering crash, you hear the shouts of githyanki troops as the deck doors of the flagship split and unfurl like an insect's shell. Spread out along the rail, around twenty githyanki howl in defiance. Behind them stands the hulking figure in golden armor, his voice booming over the bloodlust of his troops and the shrieking storm of the astral gate looming above you. "The hearts of these mortal dogs are mine! Kill them all!"*

This final battle is a free-for-all on the decks of both astral craft as they spiral out of control beneath the looming maelstrom of the astral gate. The PCs can choose to take up defensive positions in *Iliyoru*, or they can move across to take the fight to the main deck of the more wide-open *Cev'ren*. Describe the ever-present threat of the astral gate looming above, threatening to swallow both ships as they spin closer each round. The scope of this battle is limited only by your imagination and the PCs' willingness to throw themselves into the fight.

Development

The retrieval of Kada'ne's crystal key is the PCs' primary mission here, but what they do with the admiral himself is up to them. Whether Kada'ne is killed or captured, any surviving githyanki on *Cev'ren* surrender at once. The PCs are victorious, but the out-of-control ships are still heading for the astral gate above. In the aftermath of the battle, the PCs can free *Iliyoru* from *Cev'ren* and descend back to the shipyard. If the strike ship was disabled by *Cev'ren* in Encounter G6, the PCs can seize the man-of-war instead.

The grappling cables are quickly jettisoned as Iliyoru responds while you pull her away from the crippled flagship. The pressure of the astral gate is severe, and the strike ship bucks as you set course for the ground. Behind you, caught up in the white storm, Cev'ren *is quickly swept away, trailing cables and shattered rigging as it disappears into the maelstrom.*

Side Trip

Intentionally traveling through the astral gate is a poor course of action for the PCs, since they have no idea where it leads. (This knowledge is beyond even Bejam and Haryssus.) However, if the party takes that route, the other side of the astral gate is a remote portal in the Astral Sea where a number of other githyanki astral warships are circling. Their angry captains are wondering why they cannot cross over to Garaitha's Anvil (the astral gate is closed from this side by Bejam and Haryssus's magic), and they take a great interest in the appearance of a ship from the other side. The PCs have no way to return to the shipyard, but their Coalition allies will commandeer strike ships and come after them eventually. How the PCs fare until then is up to you. Alternatively, if you feel like an even bigger finish to the adventure, you can improvise a skill challenge based on the challenge in Encounter G6. Let the PCs race against time as they attempt to disengage *Iliyoru* from *Cev'ren* before both astral craft are swept up into the gate above. When they regain control of the ship, they can return safely to the shipyard below.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The astral gate sheds bright light across the decks of both ships.

Boarding Zone: A shifting 10-foot gap of empty space splits the two ships where grappling cables have lashed them together. Creatures that cannot fly or teleport can jump from one ship to the other with a DC 10 Athletics check (DC 20 without a running start), by climbing along an exposed grappling cable (a DC 15 Athletics check; see below), or by swinging across on one of the many loose rigging lines hanging between the ships (a DC 15 Acrobatics check; see below).

While none of these checks are difficult, the penalty for failure can be extreme. A creature that falls while jumping, climbing, or swinging across the gap can attempt a saving throw to grab onto the deck of the ship it is moving to. On a failed saving throw, the creature falls into empty air but can catch itself on a rigging line with a DC 27 Acrobatics or Athletics check. If that check fails, the creature falls to the shipyard below. (Unless you want to keep track of distance, assume that *Iliyoru* and *Cev'ren* climb 500 feet during the skill challenge and the subsequent battle. A fall from that height deals 250 damage.)

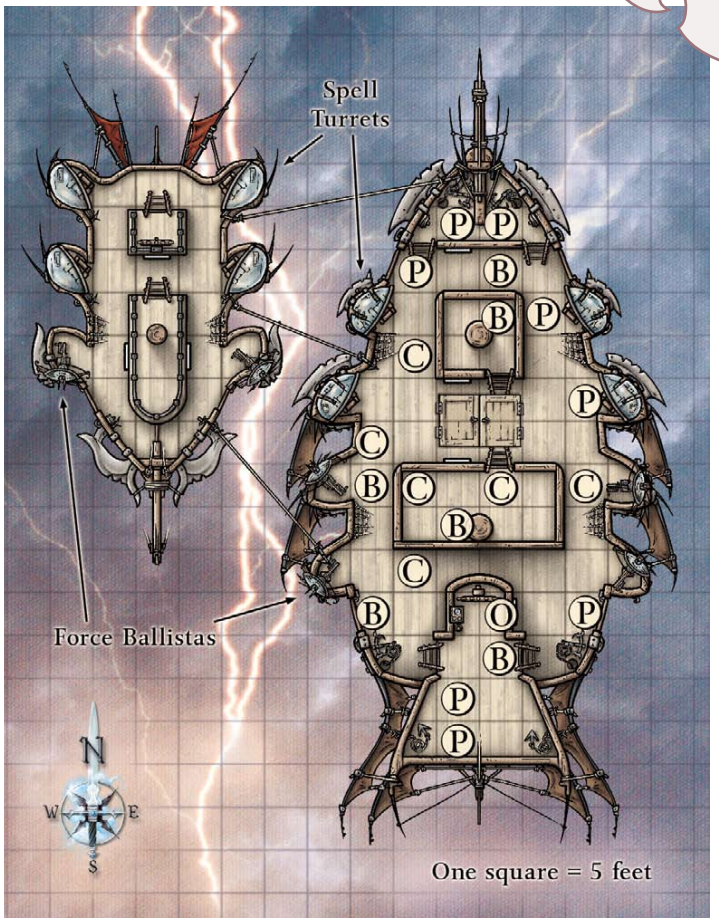
Deck: The decks of both astral craft buck and shudder as the ships spiral out of control. Each round at the beginning of its turn, a creature standing on the deck of either ship must make a DC 14 Acrobatics check or slide 1 square in a random direction. If a creature slides off the deck, see above for its chances of holding on.

Raised Deck: Raised areas are marked on the decks of both ships. These are 5 feet high and provide cover. It costs 1 extra square of movement to swing up onto a raised deck.

Rigging Lines: Damage dealt to both ships in the previous encounter has left rigging lines hanging in the empty air between them. A rigging line is stout rope (AC 10, Reflex 10, Fortitude 5; 15 hit points). A creature can grab a rigging line and swing from one ship to the other with a running start of at least 2 squares and a DC 15 Acrobatics check.

Grappling Cables: These thick cables are a tough weave of steel and adamantine (AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; 100 hit points). Pulling a grappling cable out of the ship it is sunk into requires a DC 33 Strength check. Cables cannot be forcibly detached from the ship they are shot from, but the controls on a ship can disconnect its own cables as a minor action.

Climbing from one ship to another by way of a grappling cable requires a double move and a DC 15 Athletics check.



Admiral Kada'ne

Tactics

Kada'ne fears for his life, and the cowardly admiral is not eager to engage the PCs. He stays at the back of the fray for as long as possible, using his minions as cover while he targets PCs adjacent to each other with *astral whirlwind*. PCs who get within 5 squares are hit with *soulstorm strike* before Kada'ne uses *astral stride* to teleport to safety.

The corsair cutters and the githyanki blademasters fight in pairs, flanking for combat advantage.

The githyanki psychic archers target PCs engaging the corsair cutters and the blademasters, dazing targets to grant the melee attackers additional advantage.

Only when half of Kada'ne's minions have been killed does the gish overlord take the fight to the PCs. He makes a *soulstorm strike* against any characters in range before using *astral whirlwind* to attempt to stun whichever character has been most effective in combat. He then uses *blade fury* against that foe twice by spending an action point. Kada'ne repeats this tactic immediately with his second action point, then stays at the center of the fray making *soulstorm strike* and *blade fury* attacks each round against every PC he can target.

Admiral Kada'ne, (O) **Level 19 Solo Skirmisher**
Githyanki Gish Overlord
Medium natural humanoid **XP 12,000**

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +18
HP 724; **Bloodied** 362
AC 33; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29
Saving Throws +5 (+7 against charm effects)
Speed 5, teleport 6
Action Points 2

⊕ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+24 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Blade Fury (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Kada'ne makes four *silver greatsword* attacks and can shift up to 2 squares after each. *Effect:* Kada'ne teleports 3 squares and gains a bonus to his next attack roll equal to the number of creatures he hit with this attack.

Soulstorm Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Radiant**
Close blast 5; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 lightning and radiant damage and ongoing 10 lightning and radiant damage.

Astral Whirlwind (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Psychic, Radiant**
Area burst 1 within 10; +22 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; Kada'ne or an ally within range can fly 5 squares.

Rescuing Banishment (immediate interrupt, when an ally in range is hit by an enemy attack; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Ranged 10; targets the hit ally; the target is banished to a demiplane and suffers no effect of the triggering attack. It returns to a square within 10 squares of Kada'ne at the start of Kada'ne's next turn.

Silver Banishment (free, when Kada'ne hits a target with a weapon attack; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Teleportation**
The target is banished to a demiplane (save ends). It disappears from sight, cannot take actions, and cannot be targeted. On a save, the target reappears in the space it last occupied. If that space is occupied, the target returns to the nearest unoccupied space of its choosing.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic
Skills Insight +18, Intimidate +20

Str 26 (+17)	**Dex** 22 (+15)	**Wis** 18 (+13)
Con 21 (+14)	**Int** 19 (+13)	**Cha** 22 (+15)

Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword, crystal key

8 Githyanki (P) Psychic Archers **Level 16 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 350 each**

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic jump*

⊕ **Silver Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+23 vs. AC; 6 damage.

↗ **Psychic Shot** (standard; requires longbow; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +21 vs. Will; 8 psychic damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki psychic archer flies 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 18 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 17 (+11)
Con 21 (+13) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment leather armor, silver dagger, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

6 Githyanki (C) Corsair Cutters **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 400 each**

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 10 damage.

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki corsair cutter flies 5 squares.

Combat Advantage
A githyanki corsair cutter deals 3 extra damage on melee attacks against any target that is granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 23 (+14) **Wis** 21 (+13)
Con 16 (+11) **Int** 17 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Equipment: leather armor, light shield, silver longsword

6 Githyanki (B) Blademasters **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 400 each**

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic jump*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 8 psychic damage.

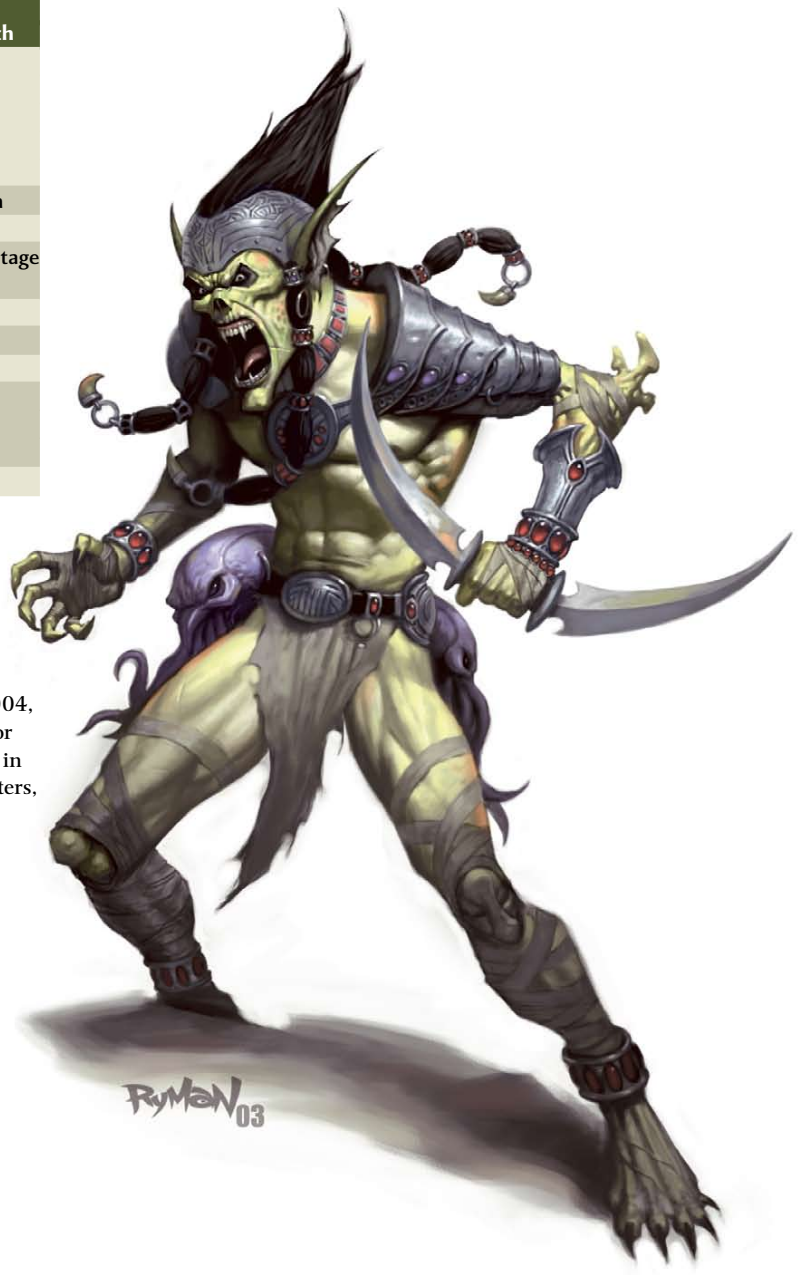
Twin Longsword Strike (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 12 psychic damage

Telekinetic Jump (move; encounter)
The githyanki blademaster flies 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 12 (+9)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, 2 silver longswords

About the Author

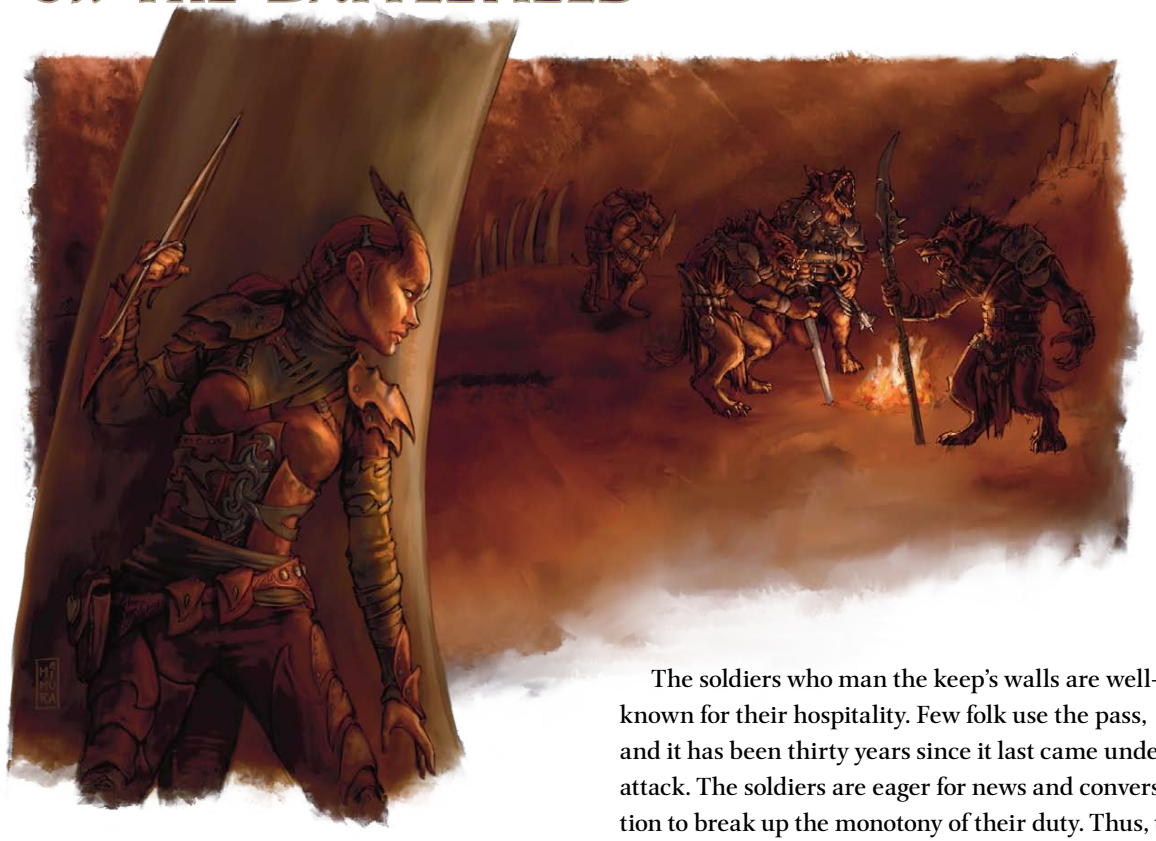
Scott Fitzgerald Gray (9th-level layabout, vindictive neutral) started gaming in high school and has worked as a writer and editor much of the time since then. After belatedly realizing he could combine both vocations in 2004, he's been making up for lost time as a freelance RPG editor and designer, primarily for Wizards of the Coast. He lives in the Canadian hinterland with a schoolteacher, two daughters, and a large number of animal companions.



Life During Wartime: Part 2

Skill Challenges on the Battlefield

BY MIKE MEARLS
Illustration by Raven Mimura



Last month I presented some advice on using a skill challenge for large scale battles. This month, it's time to show off an example. As with the last sample skill challenge I created, this one describes skill DCs as hard, moderate, or easy, as per the table of DCs on page 42 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Additionally, this skill challenge sets the PCs against an army of hobgoblins led by an oni warlord. Such an army is a good foe for a heroic-tier adventuring party. For higher-level groups, consider changing the enemy soldiers to azers or giants, while the commander could become a titan or a balor. Focus on choosing monsters for Tzusho's bodyguard and command staff that provide a good challenge to the PCs.

Skill Challenge: Attack on the Keep of Alderweg

The characters must travel through Snake Narrow Pass, a treacherous, narrow road. On one side, a steep slope rises like a wall. On the other, the road gives way to a cliff that drops hundreds of feet to a narrow valley below. Legend says that Kord cut the pass through the mountain when he battled a massive, slithering primordial of fire and darkness. Regardless of its origin, the narrow pass offers the quickest, but most dangerous, route through the mountains.

Halfway through the pass stands the Keep of Alderweg, a small fortress that clings to the mountainside. The road through the pass runs through the keep's gates, ensuring that any invading orc or goblin army must fight its way through to gain access to the civilized lands beyond.

The soldiers who man the keep's walls are well-known for their hospitality. Few folk use the pass, and it has been thirty years since it last came under attack. The soldiers are eager for news and conversation to break up the monotony of their duty. Thus, the characters should look forward to drinking ale and swapping stories by a roaring fire, rather than spending a night in the cold, wind-swept pass.

Of course, nothing quite works out the way adventurers hope. When the PCs arrive at the keep, they learn that it is about to come under attack. Even worse, much of the garrison (including its commander) have fallen victim to a poison slipped into

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their food. The characters must rally the defenders to drive off a small army of hobgoblins, griffons, and ghostly undead, commanded by a wily oni night haunter named Tzusho.

PREPARING FOR THE ASSAULT

The keep is manned by forty warriors and their commander, a half-elf named Tiera Everflame. Tiera is a tough, no nonsense leader who commands the respect of her warriors. Normally, the garrison could take care of the attack on its own, but Tzusho played a cruel trick on them. Disguised as a holy man of Pelor, he sought refuge in the fort and poisoned the garrison's dinner. Tiera and half of the warriors are now incapacitated with terrible stomach cramps and weakness. Not only does Tiera have too few warriors to defend the place without the PCs' help, but she also needs assistance in readying the keep for the assault.

The characters have one day to prepare for the attack. The healthy warriors are organized into four groups of five each. Up to two PCs and one squad can take part in the following actions. One PC can make a check, and another can aid him. The squad provides manual labor. Without a squad, the PCs suffer a –5 penalty to the check.

This is not a skill challenge, but the results of the checks do have an impact on the coming challenges. Each action takes a full day to complete. Thus, a party of 5 characters can, at most, attempt five of the following options.

Care for the Sick: The PCs can restore one additional squad of five soldiers to fighting condition with a hard Heal check.

Fortify the Gate: The PCs can strengthen the gate against attackers with a moderate Athletics check, moving timbers and stones into position. If the PCs succeed, they fail the Defending the Gate skill challenge after 4 failures rather than 3, and they do not lose a squad on the first failure in that challenge.

Scout: The PCs can attempt to scout for information on the approaching forces. This is a moderate DC Nature check to sneak into the wilderness and find a good spot to spy on the enemy forces. If the PCs succeed, they gain a +2 bonus on all Insight and Perception skill checks made as part of the Tactical Command skill challenge.

Forge Caltrops: The fort has a forge and bellows, and a large supply of construction materials, such as nails, iron spikes, and so forth, that can be crafted into crude caltrops. With a hard Athletics check, the PCs gain a +2 bonus on all skill checks made as part of the Artillery Fire skill challenge. With the caltrops spread on the road, the attackers' slow advance leaves them vulnerable to ranged attacks.

Craft Decoys: Using bedding, rags, and spare weapons from the armory, the PCs can craft a number of dummies to trick the attackers into thinking that the fort is more heavily defended than it actually is. With a hard Bluff check, the PCs gain a +2 bonus on one Endurance check during the Defending the Gate skill challenge. The PCs can choose to use this bonus after rolling a check. The hobgoblins, distracted by the decoys, fail to concentrate their attack as well as they should.

Salvage Potions: The fort had a supply of *potions of healing* on hand, but Tzusho sabotaged them during his visit. With a hard DC Arcana check, the PCs can salvage three *potions of healing*. If they distribute them to the soldiers, they do not lose a squad the first time a failed skill check causes them to take casualties.

CRY HAVOC!

Just after sunrise the next morning, the enemy army comes into view. Four well-disciplined regiments of thirty hobgoblin grunts (*Monster Manual*, page 138) march from the north to the fort. Above them flit five hippogriff dreadmounts (*Monster Manual*, page 146), each ridden by a hobgoblin archer (*Monster Manual*, page 139). A hobgoblin commander (*Monster Manual*, page 140) and his retinue of a warcaster (*Monster Manual*, page 140), two hobgoblin soldiers (*Monster Manual*, page 139), and a hobgoblin archer (*Monster Manual*, page 139) command the advancing units.

Tzusho commands from the rear, accompanied by 2 phantom warriors (*Monster Manual*, page 116), 2 specters (*Monster Manual*, page 244) and a mad wraith (*Monster Manual*, page 266) that serve as his personal bodyguards.

The attack is broken into three complexity 1 skill challenges, each requiring 4 successes before 3 failures. When you run this skill challenge, the players assign their characters to each challenge. The battle is broken up into 5 minute rounds. Each round, the characters can make one primary skill check for each challenge. One character makes that check, and others assigned to the challenge can either aid that check or use secondary skills. Make the checks for the challenges in the order they are presented, applying the effects of a failure or success before making the check for the next challenge.

After you have made a primary check for each challenge, the next round begins. Repeat the process until

the PCs have either succeeded or failed the Defend the Gate challenge. At that point, the battle ends.

If no PC is assigned to a challenge, the characters automatically take a failure for that challenge. At the end of a round, the PCs can reassign themselves to different challenges before starting the next round.

The PCs must also assign their soldiers by squad (remember that they have four squads total as a default, unless they took preparations that provided them with more squads) to either the Artillery Fire or the Defend the Gate skill challenges. The challenges provide specific benefits and drawbacks for assigning warriors to each location. With two squads in a challenge, the PCs suffer no benefits or penalties. With fewer than that, they suffer penalties as the position is undermanned. With more, they gain a benefit. At the end of a round, the players can redistribute the squads as they see fit.

Wild Card Encounters

At two points in the battle, Tzusho commits his elite forces to the battle. The first encounter occurs after the second round of the skill challenge. The second occurs once the PCs have defeated two of the hobgoblin regiments.

Wrathful Spirits: Tzusho's personal bodyguard—the ghosts, specters, and mad wraith—use their phasing and flight abilities to attack the archers manning the walls. Make Stealth checks for those monsters, using the lowest result and comparing it to the passive Perception scores of the PCs assigned to the Tactical Command and Artillery Fire skill challenges. If the Stealth check succeeds, the PCs lose one squad from the Artillery Fire challenge as the undead make their attack. The characters from all the challenges can then gang up to fight the attackers. Each creature flees when bloodied. For each one slain by the PCs, the characters gain a +1 bonus on the primary skill checks made for the Tactical Command challenge for the rest of the battle. Tzusho uses his undead minions to spy on the PCs and terrify the garrison. Without them, the PCs have an easier time countering his moves and keeping morale high.

Leading from the Front: Once the PCs defeat two regiments, the hobgoblin commander and his retinue lead the next attack. At the start of the next Defend the Gate skill challenge, those hobgoblins personally lead the attack. The PCs can rally at the gate to fight them. The grunts and the warriors do not take part in this encounter, as they are too busy battling elsewhere along the walls. This is a fight to the death for the hobgoblins. However, for each PC they drop to 0 hit points, the characters suffer a –2 penalty on the next primary check they make as part of the Defend the Gate challenge. The hobgoblins take heart in the PCs' defeat, even if healing makes it temporary, while the garrison wilts as their leaders fall.

Challenge 1: Tactical Command

With Tiera having fallen ill, a PC must take command. This skill challenge allows a PC to rally the troops, issue orders, and keep the garrison fighting in the face of overwhelming numbers. The PCs in this challenge issue orders and urge the defenders to fight on.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, History, and Intimidate, hard DC. With a successful check, the PC succeeds in directing the troops and keeping their morale up. The characters gain a +2 bonus to their primary skill checks in the Artillery Fire skill challenge. If this check fails, the primary check instead suffers a –2 penalty.

Secondary Skills: Insight and Perception, moderate DC. A careful observer can spot the enemy's strategy as it develops. With a successful check, the +2 bonus from a successful primary skill check applies to both the Artillery Fire and the Defend the Gate primary skill checks.

Success: If the PCs succeed at this skill challenge they gain a +2 bonus to the primary checks in the other two skill challenges until the end of the encounter. The PCs both determine Tzusho's ploy and give the defenders the resolve to fight until the end.

Failure: Half of the surviving squads break and run, putting the PCs in a bad situation indeed as panic spreads through the defenders.

Challenge 2: Artillery Fire

The soldiers assigned to the walls rain crossbow and catapult fire down on the enemy. The PCs can contribute with fire of their own to thin the attacker's ranks. Without sustained fire, the hobgoblins can throw the full weight of their numbers against the gate.

Squads: The primary skill check in this challenge suffers a –5 penalty if only one squad is assigned here, and –10 if no squads are here. If the PCs have assigned three or more squads here, they gain a +5 bonus.

Primary Skills: Perception, hard DC. A PC with at least one area, at-will attack can use Arcana in place of Perception. This check allows the PC to direct fire against the hobgoblins' weakest point. On

a successful check, the PCs and the soldiers fighting here kill one of the hippogriffs and its rider and disrupt the attackers at the gate. The PCs gain a +2 bonus on the Defend the Gate challenge's primary skill check, as only a few hobgoblins reach the gate to join the attack. If they fail, an entire additional hobgoblin regiment advances to attack the gate. The Defend the Gate challenge explains the significance of this.

Killing Hobgoblins: There are no secondary skills in this challenge, but a character on the walls can use 3 full rounds of actions to make ranged or area attacks against the hobgoblin grunts or the hippogriffs. These attacks must have at least a 5 square range. For each grunt slain, the primary check gains a +1 bonus. If one of the hippogriffs is killed, the primary check is made with a +5 bonus. An area attack targets grunts equal to 1 + the burst's size.

Success: The PCs succeed at this skill challenge after 4 successes or after killing all the hippogriffs or their riders. The hobgoblins, pinned down by sustained fire, can no longer advance reinforcements to the gate.

Failure: After 3 failures, all of the regiments fight at the gate, leaving the defenders there a difficult task indeed. In addition, after the third failure, the PCs lose one squad of soldiers from the sustained effects of the hobgoblin archers' arrow fire.

Challenge 3: Defend the Gate

The PCs and the soldiers they command must defend the gate. The hobgoblins advance with a battering ram and siege ladders. At the start of the battle, one regiment advances to attack the gate. The rest push forward under fire from the walls.

Squads: The primary skill check in this challenge suffers a –5 penalty if only 1 squad is assigned here, –10 if no squads are here, and a +5 bonus if three or more squads are here.

Hobgoblin Regiments: All checks in this challenge suffer a –5 penalty if two or more regiments reach the gate.

Primary Skills: Endurance, hard DC. In a battle of this size, endurance, rather than raw strength, carries the day. A lone PC might hack down three or four hobgoblins on her own, but a dozen more warriors swarm to take the place of the fallen. A successful defense of the gate requires a tireless commander, one who constantly moves from place to place and aids the defenders as needed.

Secondary Skills: Heal, Intimidate, hard DC. By either patching up wounds or casting fear into the hobgoblins, the PCs keep the garrison fighting hard. With a successful check, the primary check gains a +2 bonus.

Killing Hobgoblins: A character at the gate can use 3 full rounds of actions to make melee or close attacks against the hobgoblin grunts in place of a secondary skill check. For each grunt slain, the primary check gains a +1 bonus. A close attack targets two hobgoblins, or three if the attack is a blast or burst 5 or more.

Success: With each success, the PCs defeat one hobgoblin regiment. Once they have achieved 4 successes, the enemy army routs and the PCs win the battle.

Failure: With a failed check, a regiment succeeds in entering the fort. All primary skill checks made in all of the challenges suffer a –4 penalty. If the PCs gain a success in this challenge, they drive the regiments back out in addition to destroying one, eliminating the penalty. In addition, each time the PCs fail this challenge, roll a d20. On a 10 or higher, they lose a squad of soldiers.

Aftermath

If the PCs succeed at the Defend the Gate challenge, they have defeated the attacking hobgoblins. You can run a battle between the PCs and Tzusho along with a few of his surviving warriors. Alternatively, the oni swears vengeance against the PCs before fleeing into the mountains.

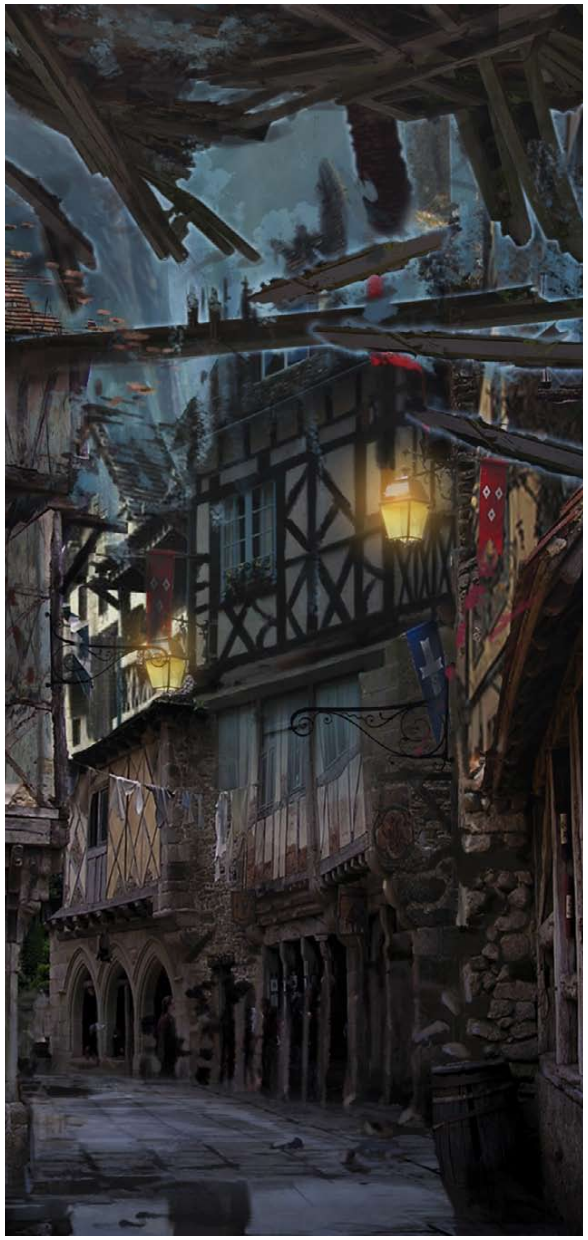
If the PCs fail to defend the gate, the hobgoblins overrun the keep. If the PCs succeeded in at least one of the other challenges before that happened, they make an orderly withdrawal. The surviving warriors escape, along with half of the sick warriors. The PCs also escape unharmed. Otherwise, each PC suffers damage equal to his or her bloodied value and the garrison is killed or captured.

About the Author

Mike Mearls is the Lead Developer for the Dungeons & Dragons® roleplaying game. His recent credits include H1: *Keep on the Shadowfell*™ and *Player's Handbook® II* 2.

Finding Victims

BY STEPHEN RADNEY-MACFARLAND
illustration by Rob Alexander



You ever have one of those stretches where you find yourself having the same conversation over and over again? It's almost as if you have a sign on your back that says, "Ask me ...." Lately, be it through email, Facebook, Twitter, shopping at game stores, talking to students, or just hanging out with friends, this is the question that keeps popping up: how do I get in on a Dungeons & Dragons game?

This question typically has two distinct species. The first comes from someone who just wants to play in a game. Either they've dropped out of playing or have never had a chance to play D&D but have picked up the two new Player's Handbooks, dug up some dice, and are ready to throw down. The other species is the budding storyteller. They want to gather a group of potential victims and unleash monsters, traps, and hard decisions but are unsure of the logistics. This month I'll share some tips and strategies for not only finding a group but finding and maintaining the right group.

Becoming Someone Else's Victim

You whippersnappers have it easy. Back in my day, when we went looking for a game, we had to find a game store and hope they had a bulletin board, then suffer though doctor-like handwriting to find what *might be* a good and stable game. Nowadays there are great tools for finding games in any neck of the woods.

While many game stores still have the ol' bulletin board, and you should check those out, just about every RPG or D&D fan site on the intrawebs has a "looking for local game" message board. Yes, there's one in the D&D section of the Wizards of the Coast message boards.

Obsidian Portal, that campaign wiki that I discussed earlier, has a method for flagging and listing campaigns that are looking for players. The only problem is that it doesn't allow you to search by geographical location ... or if it does, I can't find it.

A site I only stumbled on recently via a sticky message on our own message boards is Pen and Paper games, a site dedicated to helping players and gamemasters for all roleplaying games find one another. The great thing about this site is that you can search for games, but you can also register your gaming preferences, location, and schedule, and the site will inform you when games pop up which meet your criteria. After less than a week on the site, I've received almost a dozen pings of new games or gamers in my area. Pretty nifty!

I have to admit, though, that one of my all-time favorite ways to find new games is something I stum-

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bled upon quite a while ago, and it has been part of my gaming life ever since — the RPGA.

Now, before you RPG elitists snort and mumble things about tournament play, munchkins, or whatever imaginary crimes against gaming taste that you believe the network is guilty of (yes, I can see you through the screen), hear me out. With a network of thousands of gamers all playing D&D on a regular basis, the RPGA may be the best way to find a game and fellow gamers. Many groups meet in game stores, libraries, or community centers each week. While gamers can be a cliquish lot, members of the RPGA are always ready to fill out tables with new folk. Even if you're looking for a more traditional D&D group, you'll find many RPGA DMs who run their own home games and who may be looking for a new player or two. I've met some of my favorite tablemates and many lifelong friends through the RPGA. When I was younger, I moved often, and every time, the RPGA was there to help me quickly connect to local gamers and make sure I was rolling dice with a new batch of like-minded folk in record time.

Gathering Victims Onto You

Many of the basics for gathering you own D&D group are the same as looking for a game to join. Obviously, you can utilize the same boards and websites, and your local RPGA group is just as useful to you as the people searching for a game. The biggest difference is that it's your job to initiate the search by planning and advertising your game.

The desire to run a game is one thing; carving out the time to do it is another. The first thing you should do is budget the time for your game — seriously. First, figure out what are the best times to host a game. While evenings are fine, beware. When I was younger, I ran a campaign after working a 10-hour shift. While youthful vigor allowed me to run until 2 a.m. most nights, there were a few weeks when fatigue set in, and one time that I actually fell asleep just before my players showed up. They had a dickens of a time waking me, and when they did, I was ... grumpy. Grumpy is not a good mindset for running a game, and that session suffered at least as much as I did. In hindsight, I should have run the game on my day off. It was not my finest five hours as a DM.

Back in my day, when we went looking for a game, we had to find a game store and hope they had a bulletin board, then suffer though doctor-like handwriting to find what might be a good and stable game.

Once you figure out when is the best time to run your game, carve out time to prepare for the game. If you're unsure how much time you'll need, look at page 18 of *Dungeon Master's Guide*. It outlines a few prep strategies and how much time is needed for each. Be honest, if not downright conservative, about the amount of time you need for prep and the amount of time you have for prep. If this is your first time running a campaign, I suggest using the two-hour preparation strategy, but give yourself three hours a week. It involves running a published adventure and gives you enough time to understand and reflect on the material. By running someone else's creation (modified with your own flourishes, of course), you'll learn what you like and don't like when it comes to D&D storytelling, which will help create your own DM's "voice."

Finally, find the space to play your game. This could be as easy as making sure the dining table is cleared off before each session, as expensive as buying some tables specifically for a living room set up, or as complicated as asking the local game store for space to run your game on a weekly basis. Whichever way you go, make sure the space is large and comfortable enough. Four to six hours is a long time to spend wedged into a too-small space.

Once your game is budgeted, it's time to look for players. When doing so, be clear and definite in your communication. Many groups break down even before the game starts because the DM is wishy-washy about the details, and it causes decision paralysis for the potential group. Allow me to elaborate. If you know when and where you want to run the game, spell it out. If you want to use a par-

Grumpy is not a good mindset for running a game, and that session suffered at least as much as I did.

ticular setting, say so. This lets the players know your expectations and reduces the chance of conflict with scheduling or creative vision down the road. While I am a strong believer in catering a campaign storyline to your players (that's just good storytelling), it is also important for the DM to run the campaign that she or he wants to run and on a schedule that allows enough time for rest and prep. Without these things, a DM is prone to burnout. And when the DM burns out, the game dies.

Making the Right Group

Make no mistakes, a D&D campaign is a relationship. It will be filled with many, many instances of heroic fun which will be the chief motivator for coming back to the game table week after week, but once in a while, things will get rocky. I've played enough convention games to know that you can't always play games with people you like, but you should always campaign with people you do. Because when you like someone, it is easier to get through those occasional rocky places.

I say this because when you begin a campaign with a bunch of new people, you need to figure out whether you like gaming with them. No matter how hard you try, there will be people that you will not like gaming with and who will not like gaming with you.

This is another reason why the RPGA is one of the best gaming social networking tools out there. Because of the RPGA's structure, I can try playing D&D with a number of folk in my area, find the ones I really, honestly enjoy playing with, and then invite them to join a home campaign. The only problem I've found with this is that I typically know more people I enjoy playing with than I have seats around my game table, but that's a whole different sort of problem.

If you don't have an RPGA group, or you're looking for players to join an existing campaign, don't be afraid to have "soft tryouts." Invite the person to play in a session or two. This lets them see whether they like the setting, the current players, and your DMing style, lets you see how well they mesh with the campaign and the group, and lets the current players see how well they'll get along with the potential addition. Give it a few weeks and talk about the experience If things don't work out, problems should become apparent and everyone will realize it.

This method has its hazards. Sometimes you'll find a player who doesn't fit your playing style or group but doesn't realize it. That's a hard conversation to have, trust me. But having it is infinitely better than letting problems simmer. Be nice but firm. If possible, refer the player to groups you're acquainted with where he or she might be a better fit.

Now you're ready. Go forth and become a victim or find your own.

The first thing you need to understand when your significant other says that they would rather you not play RPGs (or not play so many) is that what they are really saying is that they would rather you spend that time with them.

The Mailbag!

Balancing a Relationship and Gaming

I've been out of gaming for a long time, but D&D 4E has brought me back into the fold. I play in one game on Saturday nights, but now I think I want to run a game again; something I haven't done since high school. The problem is that my husband doesn't like the idea of me playing more than once a week. I don't really think he likes me gaming on Saturday night. What can I do to convince him to let me run the game?

– Rachel the Saturday Night Warlock

Like yourself, I'm married to a nongamer. Actually, my wife likes plenty of games, just not RPGs, which is hard because, of course, RPGs are my favorite games. Some people just don't hear the clarion call of role-playing. The first thing you need to understand when your significant other says that they would rather you not play RPGs (or not play so many) is that what they are really saying is that they would rather you spend that time with them. While it seems obvious, it took me a long time to realize this. Now, when I want to go play in a game, I'm careful to either schedule it in a time where she has something going on without me, or bargain for that time by making sure that we take an equivalent amount of time to do something

that both of us enjoy doing together. Games are so thought- and time-consuming that it's easy for your partner to feel as if you're ignoring them. If you take the time and consideration to show them you're not, it goes a long way toward getting your gaming way.

Lastly, be mindful of their (and thus your) gaming limit. I have a strict two-games-a-week rule with the occasional special occasion. I stick to it most the time, and I pay the price when I don't.

My Players are Luddites!

Most of my players use the D&D Character Builder to make their characters. I love that because they send their characters to me each time they level up, and I'm confident that their math is right (or if we find it's not, we send in a glitch report). But I have a couple of players who refuse to use it. They have their own reasons, which I don't want to get into here, but it's still annoying. Their characters tend to be wrong, I don't have copies of them when I prep (because they will not even send me copies of their sheets), and they seem to spend more time during their turns because they don't use power cards. What can I do to get them to change their technology-challenged ways?

– Cyborg Carl

You probably know this already, but gamers are stubborn people. To be honest, I have similar situations in both of the games I run. In one of my games, the player who doesn't use the D&D Character Builder is a younger player, and his parents budget the amount of time he spends on the computer doing gaming stuff. I'm sympathetic with the rationale. (Listen to your parents, kids!) One of the other players has recently taken on the duties of building and updating this fellow's character in the Character Builder. It works, but it takes some coordination, and it saddles another player with the update work. So I think it's fairly drastic.

The other group has some adults who refuse to use it. One in particular likes doing the math (it allows him to have a deeper understanding of the game), does the math correctly, and sends me copies when I need them, so no problems there. The other ones were just being difficult. That is, until I showed them the free demo version of the D&D Character Builder. In case you don't know about it, you can make up to 3rd-level characters with the demo version, which I find typically sells even the most curmudgeonly gamer on the program's usefulness.

Most of my players use the D&D Character Builder to make their characters. I love that because they send their characters to me each time they level up, and I'm confident that their math is right (or if we find it's not, we send in a glitch report)

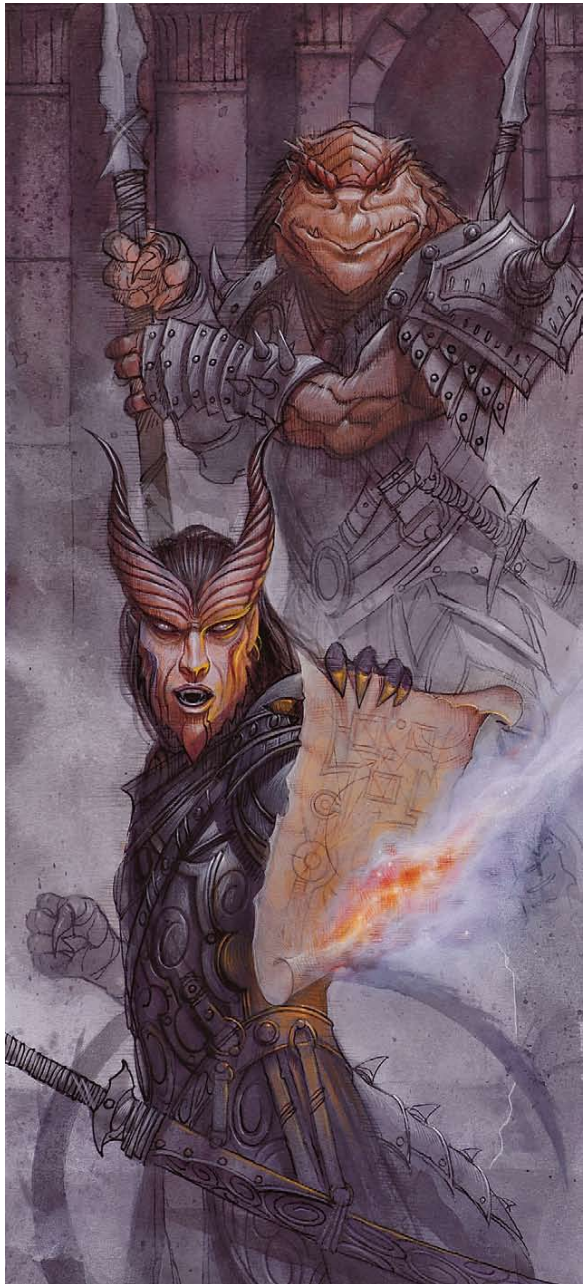
If that doesn't work, I think you may just have to deal with it. Gamers can be stubborn.

About the Author

Born on a stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration, the stars were definitely wrong when **Stephen Radney-MacFarland** came screaming into the world. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne're-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games. Once that RPGA guy, Stephen is now a developer in RPG R&D where he doesn't create the traps... he just makes them deadlier. He also teaches a class on roleplaying design for the Art Institute of Seattle, molding the minds of young and upcoming designers. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

Episode 15: Super Adventure! (Part 1)

BY JAMES WYATT
illustration by Wayne England



My Greenbrier campaign has been limping along for the last month, with a lot of vacations really limiting our play time. The group's still not done with the Free RPG Day giveaway adventure I've been running them through. So this month I'm going to look a ways down the road and start thinking about what I've always intended to be the centerpiece of this campaign: The Gates of Firestorm Peak, Bruce Cordell's awesome 1996 adventure.

I wrote the paean to the super adventure that forms pages 138–139 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, based largely on ideas that formed in my head during a departmental meeting about adventures in 4th edition. This is another case in the game's design where the phenomenon of MMORPGs served as a mirror to help me better see and understand something that has been part of *D&D* for a very long time.

In World of Warcraft, to take an MMO example completely at random, the most *D&D*-like experiences are called instanced dungeons, or instances. An instance takes the "massively" out of the genre and puts you and your group of buddies alone in a dungeon with the bad guys. The things you kill stay dead as long as you remain in the dungeon, so you get to enjoy the illusion that you're actually having an impact on the game world through your actions. You fight your way to boss monsters who drop fantastic loot items as a reward for your great teamwork.

One of the things that's particularly interesting about instances in an MMO is that they need to have some amount of replayability. There's no way the game could provide new instances for you to do night after night—it would require far too much development time and money. Instead, the game encourages you to visit the same instances multiple times.

One incentive the game provides is treasure. You don't necessarily get the best items the first time you kill a boss, so you're encouraged to attempt the instance multiple times until everyone in the group has all the items they want.

Another incentive—the one that's more relevant to *D&D*—is providing multiple storylines related to the dungeon, each with quests that send you in there with a purpose.

When I was writing the DMG material about super adventures, it seemed important to me to stress that we haven't adopted anything from the world of MMOs into *D&D* that wasn't already in *D&D*. The sidebar on page 138 lifts up *Dwellers of the Forbidden City* as a "proto-super adventure," because the designer (Zeb Cook) recognized the potential of the Forbidden City as an adventuring site ripe with possibilities for multiple storylines. If you run the

adventure as written, you probably won't clear all the monsters out of the ruined city. You find a way in, track down the wizard responsible for the caravan raids, and get out. You might leave whole areas of the city unexplored, including the alternative routes in that you didn't choose the first time.

That would effectively mean wasted pages in the adventure unless the DM has a way to bring you back into the city. Then, the possibilities come alive. Now you need to return to the city. The route you took in before is no longer viable—it's more heavily guarded, or maybe blocked off. Your new quest takes you to a different part of the ruined city, and you interact with different denizens. Things might have changed—after you killed a bunch of yuan-ti on your first visit, perhaps another monster group moved into their old territory.

That experience is the heart of those two pages of the DMG. A super adventure:

- revolves around a single setting (the Forbidden City);
- allows nonlinear exploration (choosing your approach, then wandering through the various parts of the city at will);
- encourages character specialization (you fight the same kinds of monsters repeatedly, rewarding you for making yourself better against those foes or in the common environment); and
- involves multiple quests and expeditions (returning to the city with a new purpose).

As written, *The Gates of Firestorm Peak* isn't really a super adventure by these standards. It's 96 pages, which is the same length as *Keep on the Shadowfell* and the other print adventures we've published for 4th Edition. It's actually a fairly linear dungeon adventure, progressing from the Outer Complex and the Mines (inhabited by duergar), through the Twisted Caverns (where Far Realm energies have warped and twisted the trolls and other inhabitants), and into the Inner Sanctum and the Vast Gate, where the mad sorcerer Madreus works his schemes.

I, however, want to turn this adventure into the centerpiece of my campaign. I penciled it into my campaign arc as an adventure that would take the characters from level 14 to level 20. It's not going to do that unless I expand it considerably, and what I have in mind is turning it into a proper super adventure, following the principles I just outlined. So with that preamble, let's look at the adventure at hand.

THE SETUP

Firestorm Peak has occupied a central place in my campaign plans since I jotted it down in the idea file back in Episode 2. I haven't given it a whole lot of thought beyond putting it in my campaign arc. I figured that the characters would emerge from their second set of delves into Greenbrier Chasm, visit Cendriane in the Feywild, traverse Harrows Pass, and emerge into the Skins outside Gloomwrought in the Shadowfell. I've suggested that my version of Firestorm Peak exists simultaneously in the Shadowfell, the Feywild, and the natural world, so the characters are going to approach it from the Shadowfell after getting into some trouble in Gloomwrought.

Here are my notes about the campaign arc so far. They're pretty much as I presented them in Episode 14, but I've gone back and added a few more thoughts, particularly about laying the groundwork for this adventure.

- Level 1-3: Greenbrier Chasm—First forays, reprisals (from *Rescue at Rivenroar*), second delve to rescue captives (using Free RPG Day adventure), third visit plants seeds for Tower Watch. This might also be the time to do something with Elder Marti Veran and her grandson. What if her grandson has loose ties to Those Who Hear?
- Level 4-5: Tower Watch—Explore the ruins, fight orcs, find the observatory and learn about the comet. Hint of Elder Elves?
- Level 6-8: Lake Town—Draw on *Speaker in Dreams* and *Last Breaths of Ashenport*. Hear about the mighty, insane sorcerer Madreus who left Lake Town more than 80 years ago and went into the mountains to the west.
- Level 9-11: Greenbrier Chasm (second foray, fighting foulspawn and mind flayer boss)—introduce *Lords of Madness* organizations! If I don't use Elder Veran at level 3, I should do it now. Grell nest from *Night Below*; also incorporate rockseer elves to point to the Elder Elves?
- Level 11-12: Visit Cendriane in the Feywild, learn more about the Elder Elves. Also *A Darkness Gathering* adventure?
- Level 12-13: Harrows Pass (probably just a single adventure)—emerge into the Skins outside Gloomwrought (in the Shadowfell). Connection between keepers and Keepers?
- Level 14-20: *The Gates of Firestorm Peak*.
- Level 21-28: Greenbrier Chasm (third foray: aboleths, swordwings, gibbering orb). Use Great Shaboath from *Night Below*?
- Level 29-30: Fight the Speaker in Dreams.

So by the time the characters are venturing into Firestorm Peak, they'll have heard of the Elder Elves and the Dragon's Tear comet, they'll know about the crazed wizard Madreus, and they'll have a sense (from their visits to Cendriane and Gloomwrought) that what's happening around the peak has an impact on the Feywild and Shadowfell as well as the natural world.

A SINGLE SETTING

The space of the original adventure is fairly constrained and linear. In order to support multiple expeditions into the peak, I want to expand it. First, of course, is the idea that the Vast Gate exists in three worlds at once. I'll make sure it's surrounded by three sets of Twisted Caverns that intersect with each other at various nexus points. That means there'll be a minimum of three "factions" in the Twisted Caverns that the characters can interact with—the troll mutates in the natural world's caverns, then perhaps fomorians and cyclopses in the Feywild and shadarkai or ... something new in the Shadowfell that I can't talk about yet.

The Outer Complex will be different in each of the three worlds, and there'll be no connections among them. That makes what's effectively three separate dungeons for the characters to explore, as long as they have motivation to do that and not just blow through to the Twisted Caverns and the Vast Gate beyond.

NONLINEAR EXPLORATION

Spreading out the dungeon among three worlds makes nonlinear exploration much more plausible in this version of the adventure than it was in the original adventure. I'm assuming that the characters will approach the dungeon from the Shadowfell, so they'll do the Shadowfell version of the Outer Complex first. I'll plan for that to happen when the characters are 14th level, and I'll aim for them to face Madreus when they're 20th. But in between, I want to be flexible.

Once the characters get into the Twisted Caverns, all bets are off. They could venture in any direction, deal with any group of monsters at any time, and possibly venture back out into the other two Outer Complex areas over the course of their adventuring. My goal will be to motivate them to cover all that ground. Hopefully, I can come up with better motivations than, "You need to gain more experience before you can hope to defeat Madreus."

CHARACTER SPECIALIZATION

The Gates of Firestorm Peak is serving as the centerpiece to my campaign, and it features themes that extend from start to finish of the game. The Greenbrier campaign is all about fighting aberrations, so it'll be easy for the characters to specialize at that task, choosing feats, items, and paragon paths that make them better at that particular job. That's not really a function of this super adventure but of the campaign as a whole. I've already talked about how I plan to design or adapt paragon paths related to the organizations in *Lords of Madness* for the characters to use.

The alien environment of the Twisted Caverns, though, might also present some possibilities for character specialization. In theory, I could create some rules for moving and fighting in those areas that the players can learn to exploit to their advantage with custom-crafted feats or magic items.

TO BE CONTINUED ...

My overworked and underappreciated editors are knocking on my cube wall demanding this article. Next time, I'll discuss the quests that I'll use as the story glue for this super adventure—the structure that will encourage the characters to explore the area thoroughly (albeit in a nonlinear fashion). After that, I'll go on to outline the super adventure in broad strokes.

About the Author

James Wyatt is the *D&D* Design Manager for Wizards of the Coast Roleplaying R&D. He was one of the lead designers for 4th Edition *D&D* and the primary author of the 4th Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. He was one of the designers of the *Eberron Campaign Setting* and is the author of several *Eberron* novels.